Saviours of Islamic Spirit

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SAVIOURS OF ISLAMIC SPIRIT

VOLUME III

by

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FOREWORD

It was perhaps 1935 or 1936 when my respected brother Hakim Dr. Syed 'Abdul 'Alī, late Nāzim of Nadwatul 'Ulamā, directed me to go through the *Maktūbāt Imām Rabbāni Mujaddid Alf Thāni*. I was then not more than 23 or 24 years of age and had joined, a short while ago, as a teacher in the Dārul 'Uloom, Nadwatul 'Ulamā. I had never delved in the sufī literature nor was conversant with the terminology of mystic discipline. I had assiduously pursued history and literature of the Arabs, particularly history of Arabic literature, and was used to reading books with a fine get up and printing produced in Beirut and Egypt. My brother was fully aware of my tastes and likings for it was he who had been the chief guide during my educational attainments, but he intended perhaps to let me know what Iqbal has so trenchantly versified in this couplet :

> You are but the lamp of a hearth,
> Which has ever had things spiritual at heart.

Our family has been intimately connected, at least for the last three hundred years, intellectually and spiritually, with the school of thought that goes by the name of Mujaddid Alf Thānī and Shāh Walīullah. The private library of my father had a three volume collection of Mujaddid's letters which had been printed at Ahmadī Press of Delhi. I started reading the book in compliance with the wish expressed by my brother,

but was so discouraged that I had to put it off more than once. The letters written by the Mujaddid to his spiritual mentor Khāwājā Bāqī Billāh describing his spiritual experiences and ecstatic moods were specially disconcerting to me, but my brother kept on prodding me to go through the letters along with the *Izālatul Khifā'* of Shāh Walīullah, *Sirāt-i-Mustaqīm* of Saiyid Ahmad Shahīd and Shāh Isma'il Shahīd's *Mansab-i-Imāmat.* At last I made up my mind to go through all these books once for all. I felt ashamed for not being able to do what my brother had bidden. And what was this collection of letters; had it not been cherished by the most purehearted souls? Providence came to my rescue and the more I read the book, the more I found it fascinating. Now I began to understand its contents and then a time came when I became enamoured by it. It so attracted my interest that I found it more fascinating than the best literary creations. I was then passing through a most critical stage of my life: certain mental tensions and intellectual stresses and strains had put me in a turmoil. The book then came as a spiritual guide to me. I could clearly perceive the placid calm and equanimity overtaking my heart. The journey I had begun in obedience to the wishes of my brother got me through an enchanting delight.

I again started reading the Mujaddid's letters, after a short time, with the intention of classifying the ideas expressed in it under different headings. I started preparing an index of the subjects dealt with in it, for example, listing the passages dealing with the Oneness of God and repudiation of polytheistic ideas, prophethood, teachings of the Prophet and aberrations from it, non-existence of pious innovations, Unity of Being and Unity of Manifestation, reaches of intellect and intuition, and so on. The index thus prepared after several weeks' labour was kept by me in the book I had used for preparing it, so as to utilise it later on for collecting the passages according to their headings. But, somebody borrowed the book from me and it was never returned. I was saddened

more by loss of the index prepared so laboriously than of the book which could have been procured again.

Several years after this incident, perhaps in 1945 or 1946, I again thought of rearranging the different topics touched upon in these letters and presenting them with an exposition that may catch the interest of modern educated youth and acquaint him with the achievements of the Mujaddid in the field of reform and revivalism. Accordingly I undertook the task with an introductory note designed to give the substance of propositions and statements on a particular subject followed by the passages on that topic, which were scattered throughout the letters. These extracts were also to be arranged meaningfully in a systematic order, giving both the Persian text and Urdu translation with explanatory notes of difficult terms along with the *ahādīth* and supportive views of the well-known scholars and doctors of religion. The comprehensive study I had designed to undertake required a close inquiry of various issues and was surely a difficult task for a young student like me who had already been overburdened with teaching, writing and *Tabligh* activities. The result was obvious: by the time I completed the topics of Divine Unity, prophethood and apostleship it became difficult for me to continue it owing to other engagements. But, whatever of it had been written was sufficiently useful and my friend Maulānā Mohammad Manzoor Nomānī published them in his monthly journal *Al-Furqān* in four instalments during the year 1947-48.

After a few years when I started writing the history of revivalist movements, which has since appeared under the series entitled '*Saviours of Islamic Spirit*' the urge to write a biographical account of the Mujaddid engrossed my thoughts once again. In the last volume of the book I had given an account of two great Indian mystics, Khwāja Nizām-ud-dīn Auliyā and Sheikh Sharaf-ud-dīn Yahyā Manerī, belonging to the eighth century of Islamic era. I wanted to portray the life and character of the Mujaddid in the subsequent volume since it needed to be

brought into focus, for reasons more than one, in the present times of catastrophic change. I felt it necessary to restate, in clear terms, the strategy adopted by the Mujaddid for it has a greater relevance today (when the revivalist movements invariably pit themselves against the governments of their countries, from the very beginning, and plunge into difficulties). What was, after all, the method by which an ascetic had changed the entire trend and complexion of the government of his day without any means and resources? My attention had been drawn towards this fact first in the soirees of my elder brother and then by the scholarly article of Syed Manāzir Ahsan Gīlānī appearing in the special issue of the *Al-Furqān* devoted to the Mujaddid. The more I thought about the matter, the more I was convinced of the correctness of Mujaddid's approach which has been expressed by me in several of my articles and speeches[1] in Arabic.

There were still two stumbling blocks in attempting a biography of the Mujaddid. The first was that no biographical sketch of the Mujaddid could be considered complete or satisfactory without a critical assessment of the doctrines of Unity of Being and Unity of Manifestation and outlining the latter precept in some detail to demonstrate its validity. The writings on the subject have by now so copiously accumulated that it is difficult to abridge all of them or present even selected passages. Moreover, both these precepts relate to doctrinal and philosophical aspects of Islamic mysticism which cannot be understood without adequate comprehension of their terminologies and techniques depending, finally, on spiritual exercises to be experienced and mastered rather than explained in words. The author is himself a stranger to this field while most of the readers would, I suppose, be unfamiliar or rather estranged to these disciplines. How to acquit

1. I may refer, for instance, to my two speeches, one in the Azhar University, Cairo, and the other in the Islamic University, Medina, both of which have since been published.

myself of this onerous responsibility was a problem for me. On the other hand, to leave the matter untouched altogether, which is considered by some as the focal point of the Mujaddid's reformatory endeavour and the secret of his marvellous achievement, would have rendered the venture deficient and incomplete. The other difficulty was the abundant literature already existing on the subject which left no new ground to be broken nor allowed addition of one more work to it.

In regard to my first problem I decided after fully weighing the pros and cons of the matter that the Mujaddid's concepts could best be presented with the help of his own writings and the exposition of his ideas by recognised authorities and scholars belonging to his school of thought so that the readers may be led to understand the basic features of the Mujaddid's thoughts and concepts. Those who desire to pursue their studies in greater detail can then turn to the original sources or take the assistance of well-known authorities.

The way out to my second difficulty was shown by a couplet of the Poet of the East which has also found confirmation from my own experience as a writer. These verses by Iqbal could be so rendered :

Never think the cup bearer's task has finished,
The grape still has a thousand wines untouched.

Much has been written on the Mujaddid and his accomplishments, but there is room to write more, and so will it remain in future also.

Idioms and expressions, situations and circumstances and norms and values change with the times and it is not unoften that we find earlier writings as if penned in a different language requiring a new rendering to be fully comprehended by the later generations. Apart from it, every writer has his own way of interpreting things, relating causes to the effects and drawing conclusions for making them applicable to the shape of things in his own times. All these considerations convinced the writer that if a sincere effort could be made the new sketch might

prove still more useful in presenting the labours of a godly soul who devoted himself to his noble task in a calm and quiet manner with utter humility and meekness. This, I thought, would not only be useful but also prove to be a befitting presentation for the ensuing fifteenth century of the Islamic era. There is absolutely no doubt that this Renovator of Second Millennium has exerted an influence transcending the century in which he was born; and the present times, too, though seemingly changed radically, can learn a lot from him.

"My heart and pen both submit to God, humbly and meekly, in expression of gratitude to Him for enabling me to return to the *Saviours of Islamic Spirit* again after a long spell of 18 year and to write its next volume. The period intervening was so long that I had often wondered whether death would not cut short the narration of a story which has been, by the grace of God, my most popular work. Now, this volume relates to a luminary whose revivalist endeavour has already gained a recognition which is not shared by any reformer in the long history of Islamic revivalism. Such was, in fact, his success that the posterity conferred upon him the title of Mujaddid or Renovatorwith which even modern educated persons are more acquainted than his personal name. His great accomplishment, with its far-reaching influence, excels all other similar movements. These were the reasons why I wanted to write this shining chapter of Islamic history. There were also many among my readers who continuously urged me to take it up while some of my respected friends and scholars insisted upon me that I ought to give it preference over all other literary activities and occupations. The task was not so easy, however.

"Whatever matter exists in historical and biographical literature on the subject could not be presented simply by selection and abridgement. It is, in fact, insufficient for the discursive presentation of a critical research, according to modern standards, which is nowadays demanded for an intelligent comprehension of the position, and to which purpose this work commits

itself. Now, it demands a critical assessment of the intellectual and historical, moral and social and political and religious conditions of the times in which the Mujaddid undertook his great task. One has to find out what undercurrents were there in operation and what religious and intellectual unrest was fomenting in India and its neighbouring countries? What tendencies of undutifulness to Islam and its sacred law were gaining ground among the rationalists? What conspiracies against Islam were being hatched up and what hopes and aspirations were entertained after the completion of the first millennium of Islamic era by the adventurers and upstarts? What suspicions and doubts were lurking in the distrustful minds? What mischief was played, on the one hand, by philosophy and rationalism and what was done by the esoterics and Batinites, on the other, to belittle the station and place of prophethood by magnifying austerities, travails and self-mortification as the means of salvation and attaining propinquity to God? How the belief in Unity of Existence, the doctrine positing all reality as a borrowed fragment from the being of God, had opened the door of licentious freedom bordering on atheism and agnosticism."[1]

Thus, the sacred law of Islam and the Prophet's precepts were, in those days, of consequence only to a limited circle of orthodox scholars and Traditionists. Innovations in religious

1. The lines within the inverted commas were written on the 24th March, 1978, when the author had gone on a tour to the Punjab, on the insistence of Molvī Moinullah Nadwī in the *Khānqāh* adjacent to the grave of Sheikh Mujaddid Alf Thānī, by way of starting the writing of this volume. The passage dictated by the author and written by late Molvi Is'hāq Jalis Nadwī, ex-editor of the *Tāmeer Hayāt*, was later adapted in this Introduction. It still took about a year and a half to begin the work in all seriousness. Thus the writing of the book practically started on 3rd October, 1979, but it was interrupted by two long excursions abroad with the result that the author could devote only two to three months to this book.

matters were popular while some of them going under the name of 'pious innovations' had been accepted by the entire Muslim society, without a voice raised against them. What was still worse was that both the second largest Muslim empire[1] of the time and the great Muslim community living within its limits were being forced to shift its allegiance from the Arabian Prophet and Islamic beliefs and culture to Indian philosophy, Indian culture and unity of all religions for the sake of personal ends and inclinations which had joined hands with certain foreign influences and dubious political goals. Some of the most brilliant brains of the age were acting as partners in this conspiracy, loudly giving a call to New Era, New Structure, New Millennium and New Leadership.

How was this state of affairs changed? What were the means adopted and how far did they succeed? How was it that morals were purified, characters moulded and spirits raised, from a secluded far off place in a way that the souls so guided created an awareness of God among the people, revived the *sunnah* long forgotten by the masses, prepared them to abide by the sacred law, suppressed innovations in religious beliefs and practices, quashed the evil influences of misguided mendicants preaching an absured and exaggerated rendition of the Unity of Being? In short, they revived the spirit of true faith, first in India and then in Afghānistān and Turkistān and the countries beyond like Irāq, Syria, Turkey and Arabia. They continued their efforts perseveringly at least for three centuries with such vigour and industry that we find them acknowledged as religious guides in the entire world of Islam. The fact is that the subsequent three hundred years can be called an era of their intellectual and spiritual leadership. Such

1. Only next to the Ottoman Empire, the Mughal empire in India, whose limits extended from Afghānistān to Bengal, was the most powerful kingdom with its large area, military prowess and the means and resources possessed by it.

was this universal change brought about by the potent influence exerted by the Mujaddid that every unbiased man would readily acknowledge the fact—as tersely poetised by Iqbal:

A man self-conscious shook the world.

Two more aspects of the story were to be taken into account. One of it was that in depicting a picture of the reign of Akbar and the times of Mujaddid, one could not depend on the *Muntakhab-ut-Tawārīkh* of Mullā 'Abdul Qādir Badāūnī alone which is believed to have been written with a religious bias and assumed normally to present a dark and dismal picture of Akbar's regime. One had to cull out material from those impartial writers or penmen of Akbar's court who were not opposed to him and his policies but were rather exponents and promoters of his thoughts and ideas. Similarly it was necessary to make a critical review of the developments that started to shape in the reign of Jahāngīr and culminated during Aurangzib's time. Instead of having recourse to the writings of the Mujaddid's disciples or other literati with religious leanings, one had to bring out testimony of detached and unbiased historians in support of one's viewpoint.

It was also necessary to take a note of those numerous writings in Urdu and English, published during the last twenty-five years within India and abroad, which raise new issues, challenge some of the accepted facts and present an entirely new picture (which is quite different from the exalted and radiant portrait of the Mujaddid presented so far) on the basis of certain facts or their own interpretation of events. It would not be necessary to mention each and every remark made by them to refute their statements but any new biography of the Mujaddid ought to trace his achievements by depicting the conditions and circumstances of his age in a manner that it should demonstrate by itself the inconclusiveness of dissident statements.

With very heavy engagements which require frequent excursions within the country and ouside it, my none too good

health and lack of assistance,[1] I have tried that this volume of the *Saviours of Islamic Spirit* presenting certain new facts and materials not untilised so far in sketching a biographical account of Mujaddid Alf Thānī, should be brought out at the earliest. The thought-provoking facts it brings out and the impetus it gives to renewed efforts of renovation and reform would, perhaps, be helpful in meeting the demands of the present times and hailing the fifteenth century of the new Islamic Era (to greet which celebrations have already been held in certain parts of the Islamic world.)

Finally, I have to return my thanks to Māulāna Abul Hasan Zaid Farūqī Mujaddidī, son of Shāh Abul Khair, for making available to me some very valuable information about the Mujaddid's descendants and spiritual successors which, apparently, would have been most difficult to secure from other sources. Professor Khalīq Ahmad Nizāmi, too, deserves my gratitude for kindly allowing me to use his personal library containing some precious and useful manuscripts. I am indebted to Dr. Nazīr Ahmad of Muslim University, Aligarh, for extending his help to me in the task.

My thanks are also due to Syed Mohiuddin who has rendered it into English.

Abul Hasan Ali Nadwi
DAIRA SHAH 'ALAMULLAH,
RAE BARELI.

16th Ramadān
8th July, 1982

1. I would also like to express my thanks to Shams Tabrīz Khān, an associate scholar of the Academy of Islamic Research and Publications, who helped me in obtaining certain rare Persion books and also translated many a long passage for me. Nasirul Islām Nadwī also deserves my thanks since he had been helpful in locating the passages required for presentation in the book.

CHAPTER I

ISLAMIC WORLD IN THE TENTH CENTURY

Need for the study of the tenth century conditions

Mujaddid Alf Thānī was born in Shawwāl 971 A.H.[1] and died in Safar 1034 A.H.[2] and thus his life span was spread over the last twenty-nine years of the tenth century and thirty-three years in the beginning of the eleventh century. The Mujaddid's biographer should primarily be concerned with these sixty-three years covering the closing and initial periods of the tenth and eleventh centuries of Hijrī calendar.

But, truly speaking, an era never commences with the birth of a man, howsoever great he may be, as if suddenly descending from the heavens without any trace of the past happenings or the political, moral and intellectual forces interacting on the society well before his birth. In order, therefore, to make an assessment

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1. May-June, 1564 A.D.
2. November-December, 1624 A.D.

of the character and achievements of the Mujaddid, the need and nature of his revivalist movement and the forces that hampered or helped his endeavours we shall have to study the political, religious, intellectual and moral state of affairs in the then Islamic world which would have surely had an impact on his consciousness. For these would have been the conditions which would have served as an impetus for him to give his revolutionary call that made him the Renovator of the Second Millennium.

We shall have to take into account the fact that an age and its environs as well as the society are like a running stream whose every wave is impinged upon and interlinked with the other. Likewise, no country howsoever isolated from its neighbours can remain unconcerned and uninfluenced by important events, revolutions and interaction of different forces in the surrounding countries, especially when these happenings pertain to a neighbour belonging to the same faith and race. It would, therefore, not be proper for us to limit our enquiry to India alone; we shall have to run the eye over the entire world of Islām, particularly the neighbouring Muslim countries. India may not have had political relations with such countries, but religious, cultural and intellectual connexions did exist and whatever was in the wind there must have had its repercussions here.

Political conditions

Ever since the death of Sultān Salāh-ud-dīn in 589/1193 the central part of the Islamic world, better known as Middle East, had remained without a strong administration. It was after a fairly long time in the opening decades of the tenth century that it again witnessed political stability. The Arab countries of the region again gathered under the banner of one who took pride in calling himself the Defender of Faith, the Servant of the Sacred Mosques and Protector of the Muslims. He revived the Caliphate, may be in his own political interest, which had survived in Egypt more like the papacy of the Vatican, after the execution of the last Caliph Mūst'asim Billāh by the

Mongols in 656/1258. Sultān Salīm I (918-926 A.H.)[1], the founder of the Ottoman Caliphate conquered Syria in 922/1516 and then extended his dominion to Egypt in 923/1517 which had been under the sway of the Mamlūks for the last two hundred and fifty years. Salīm wrested Egypt from Qansoh Ghorī and made a declaration, in the same year, about his assumption of Caliphate and the trusteeship of the two sacred cities. The Arabian Peninsula, and thereafter all the Muslim and Arab countries of North Africa, with the exception of Morocco, gradually accepted the supremacy of Sultān Salīm I and his son Sulaimān 'Āzam al-Qanūnī (926-974 A.H.)[2], known to West as Sulaimān the Magnificent. The Mujaddid was born three years before the death of Sulaimān 'Āzam, whose reign saw the zenith of Ottoman might. His authority was firmly established, on the one hand, over Austria and Hungary in Europe and his armies were advancing victoriously, on the other, in Irān. Egypt, Syria and Irāq became part of his wide dominion. He was then sovereign of the largest empire in the world. During the rule of Sultān Murād III (982-1004 A.H.)[3] Cyprus, Tunisia and some of the fertile parts of Irān and Yemen fell to the Ottoman Empire. It was during his reign that the Grand Mosque of K'aba was reconstructed in 984/1577. The Mujaddid, then a young man, must have heard of these happenings and derived satisfaction, like other Muslims of India, for the Turks were orthodox Hanafites like them.

In the beginning of this century (905/1500) the Safawids rose to power in Irān and Khurāsān. Ismā'il Safawi (905-930 A.H.)[4] was the founder of Safawid dynasty who gradually consolidated his control over the area. Safawids were rivals of the Ottoman Turks and had, contrary to the Ottomans, declared

1. A.D. 1512-1520
2. A.D. 1520-1566
3. A.D. 1574-1595
4. A.D. 1500-1524

Shi'ism, more precisely, the doctrine of the Twelvers, as the state religion of Persia. Taking full advantage of the power wielded by him, Ismā'il resolved to convert the whole of Irān to his religion and was eminently successful in his efforts. His collision with the Sunnite Ottomans, whose coreligionists were spread over the entire area from Constantinople to Lahore and Delhi, saved Irān from getting merged in the great Ottoman Empire. The Safawid dynasty ruled over the area extending from Baghdād to Hirāt.

Shāh 'Abbās I (995-1037 A.H.)[1] or 'Abbās the Great was the most successful sovereign of the Safawid dynasty who can be compared to Shāhjahān for his architectural activities. Contemporaneous with the Mujaddid, the Safawid might was at its zenith during his rule. He fought the Ottomans to recover Karbala and Najaf. The Safawid dynasty declined after Shāh 'Abbās I whose reign in Irān is coeval with that of Akbar and Jahāngir in India.

Another important part of the Islamic world in the east was Turkistān which had been a centre of Islamic culture, arts and literature for several centuries. Known as Tansoxania in the medieval literature, it was here that most assiduous efforts were made, after Irāq, to codify the Hanafite system of Islamic law. Among the important books compiled there were the *Sharah Waqāyah* and the *Hidāyah* which are still studied as text books in India. The Naqshbandiyah school of Islamic mysticism, to which the Mujaddid and his precursors belonged, originated and developed in Transoxania and was taken from there to other parts of the Islamic world. Shaibānī dynasty of the Uzbegs assumed command over the area in the beginning of the tenth century (905/1500 A.H.) and, except for a brief period in 915/1510 when Bābur had captured Samarqand with the help of the Safawids, retained its control up to the middle of the eighteenth century of the Christian era. Two rulers of the Shaibāni dynasty,

1. A.D. 1587-1627

'Ubaid Ullah bin Muhammad (918-946 A.H.)[1] and 'Ubaid Ullah bin Askandar (964/1006)[2] made their capital at Bukhārā a centre of political power throbbing with arts and culture.

Afghānistān was the immediate neighbour of India to its west. In the beginning of the tenth century it rapidly changed hands between the Uzbegs and Safawids of Irān with occasional insurrections raised by local adventurers. Kābul and Qandhār were alternately possessed by the Mughals and Iranians, while Herāt, lying at the borders of Irān, was more often dominated by the Safawids. Bābur occupied Qandhār in 928/1522 but shifted his headquarters to India after the invasion and conquest of the country from where he ruled over Kābul, Badakhshān and Qandhār. Thereafter Afghānistān was ushered in a comparatively stable and peaceful period of its history as the land lying between two powerful kingdoms of India and Irān. The country was, however, divided between the two: Hirāt and Sīstān remained under the control of Irān and Kābul became a part of the Mughal Empire in India. Nevertheless, Hirāt and Sīstān continued to suffer from frequent incursions by the Uzbegs; Qandhār remained a bone of contention between the Mughals and the Irānians; the area to the north of Kohistān passed into a semi-independent kingdom under Bābur's cousin Sulaimān Mirza whom the former had given the charge of Badakhshān while the remaining parts of the country were held by the Shaibānīs. Qandhār was captured by Tahmasp of Persia in 965/1558 and remained under the control of Iranians until 1003/1595 when it was surrendered to Akbar by a Safawid prince, Muzaffar Husain Mirzā. Thus, Afghānistān continued as a dependency of India up to the middle of the twelfth century when Nādir Shāh finally brought the two hundred and forty years' old rule of the Mughals to an end in 1151/1738.

The Lodis held the reign of government in India at the

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1 A.D. 1512-1539

2. A.D. 1557-1597

commencement of the tenth century. The last ruler of Lodī dynasty, Ibrāhīm Lodī suffered defeat and was killed in 932/1526, fighting against Bābur who laid the foundation of the longest and most stable Muslim dynasty to rule over India. The Lodis, true to Afghān traditions, were orthodox Hanafites who disliked non-conformity in religious matters and secularism in political affairs. The greatest of the Lodī kings was Sikandar Lodī (923/1517), a pious and generous sovereign, who held scholars in great respect. The country was also fortunate to have a ruler like Sher Shāh Sūri, though he held the reins of government for a brief period from 946/1540 to 952/1545, in the tenth century. India had not seen a king more pious and learned, adept in administration and benevolent than Sher Shāh Sūri. The country did not attain stability and administrative efficiency, nor peace and prosperity after him until Akbar ascended the throne. Sher Shāh's successor Salīm Shāh Sūri was, however, not gifted with the great qualities of his father. Harassed by the victorious charges of Sher Shāh Sūri and the treachery of his brothers, Humāyūn had hard time in ruling over India until he returned again with the help afforded to him by Tahmasp Safawī of Irān. Akbar took the reins of government in his hands in 963/1556 and ruled over the country for half a century.

Jahāngīr mounted the thrown during the lifetime of the Mujaddid, when he was 43 years of age, and he also died during the reign of Jahāngīr. Besides the imperial government with its capital at Delhi, there also existed independent kingdoms of Gujarāt, Bijāpūr, Golconda and Ahmadnagar in Deccan, of which the last three were ruled by kings belonging to the Shi'ite sect.

Religious conditions

Islam still had a strong grip over the minds and hearts of the then Muslims. The masses had firm faith in the soundness of religious truths and were endowed with zeal for their religion. Some were, no doubt, guilty of occasional lapses, but the great

majority hated infidelity and polytheism.

The overwhelming public opinion favouring conformity with the religion had always compelled the Muslim sovereigns, who were otherwise autocrates as well as powerful enough to make the blood of European rulers run cold, to acclaim Islamic traditions and proclaim their willingness to protect the Faith. They never found favour with the people nor commanded respect of the populace unless they laid open their zeal for Islam. The Ottoman Sultān Salīm I achieved stability only after he had assumed the titles of Caliph and Servant of the two holy cities of Mecca and Madina and publicly paid homage to the sacred places during his stay in Damascus. He sent forth a caravan of pilgrims for Haj from Damascus in Dhil Hijja 923 A.H.[1], and provided, for the first time, a covering for the K'aba as a presentation from the Turkish sovereign. It was then that the Turkish rulers were acknowledged as Caliph-Sultān which increased their prestige tremendously. Sulaimān the Magnificent was a man of simple habits whose whole life offers several examples of his deep attachment to Islam. He prepared eight copies of the holy Qur'ān in his own hand which are still preserved at Sulaimāniyah. The poems written by him give expression to his fervour and unflinching faith in Islam. He got the K'aba reconstructed, on the authority of Mufti Abus Saūd's[2] (d. 952/1545) juristic opinion, which was completed[3] in 984/1576 by Sultān Murād. These were some of the achievements of Ottoman rulers during the tenth century.

The people in Iran, too, had a religious bent of mind. This popular sentiment of the masses was turned to their advantage by the Safawid rulers who gained popularity and strength through display of their love and respect for the progeny of the holy Prophet. Shāh 'Abbās, the most successful among the Safawid

1. December, 1517 A.D.
2. The author of the *Tafsir Abus Saūd*
3. The holy shrine still stands on the same foundation.

kings, not only covered on foot 800 miles from Isfahān to Meshhad but himself sweeped the grave of Caliph 'Ali in Najaf. The confiding trust Iranians had placed in Shāh 'Abbās I, came nigh to a credulous belief which had given rise to many a superstitious fables about him.

The people of Afghānistān and Turkistān have always been known for their strong convictions, religious fervour and attachment to the Hanafite school of Sunnism. These popular sentiments of the people have also been upheld by the elite, the nobles and rulers of these lands, though, according to their own levels and standards.

The Muslim rule in India was established by the Afghāns and Turks and therefore the religiosity of the people reflected their characteristics—strong faith and singleness of heart. Hanafite law and practices have been followed in this country, except in a few coastal areas in the south including Malabar, from the very beginning of Muslim rule. It was here that some of the important legal treatises like the *Fatāwā Tatārkhāni* and *Fatāwā Qāzi Khān* came to be written[1].

Several kings in the annals of Muslim India stand out for their zeal to uphold the Islamic law and the *sunnah* and suppression of aberrations and innovations and heterodox ideas. To cite the names of a few, Muhammad Tughluq and Fīroz Tughluq in the eighth century and Sultān Sikandar Lodī in the tenth century made these the cornerstone of the state policy. Religious precepts were followed, according to the authors of the *Tabaqāt-i-Akbari*, *Tārīkh Firishta* and *Tārīkh Dāwūdi*, so scrupulously as if a new way of life had taken roots in the country during the reign of Sikandar Lodī. According to these historians, Sikandar Lodī was devout and orthodox from his childhood who preferred the demands of faith over his own inclinations and desires. He

1. Long before the compilation of the *Fatāwā 'Ālamgīrī*, these books were written here and became popular in Egypt, Syria and Irāq under the name of the *Fatāwā Hindiyah*.

was a great patron of learning and it was through his persuation that the Kā'isthās among the Hindus took up the study of Persian language. Sikandar prohibited the annual procession of the spear of Salār Mas'ūd throughout his dominions and forbade women from paying a visit to the tombs of the saints. He is also reported to have prohibited taking out of the *T'aziā* processions and the worship of *Sītla*, the goddess of smallpox,[1] by the Muslims. The author of Wāqi'āt Mushtāqi writes that a large number of spurious tombs which had become objects of popular regard were dug out and tanks were constructed in their place.[2]

Sultān Salīm used himself to lead the congregational prayers and abstained from everything forbidden by the *shari'ah.*

This was the age of faith in which the popularity of mysticism had led to institutionalization of the system in every part of the Islamic world. There was not one country or region where the environment was not conducive to the flourishing Sufi disciplines or where one or the other branches of Sufi brotherhoods had not taken its message to every home. In Turkistān, Bukhārā and Samarkand were the two most famous intellectual and spiritual centres; the same position was occupied by Herāt and Badakhshān in Afghānistān, Alexandria and Tantah in Egypt, and T'az and Sanā in Yemen. Hadramaut was the home of a great mystic family known as Bā Alvi 'Aidrūs while Shaikh Abū Bakr b. 'Abdullah b. Abū Bakr was regarded as the most pious and godly soul of his time in that region. Tarīm was the home of another mystic family of Saiyids popular as Āl-i-Bā 'Alvī. Yet another famous mystic saint of the time was Shaikh S'ad b. 'Ali as-Saw'īnī Bāmazhaj-as-Sa'eed. Shaikh Muhī-ud-dīn 'Abdul Qādir 'Aidrūsī (978-1037 A.H.)[3] has given a detailed description of Shaikh S'ad b. 'Alī in the *An-Nūr as-Sāfir fi Rijāl al-Qarn*

1. *Tārikh Hindustān*, Vol. II, p. 374
2. *Waqiāt Mushtāqi* cited from the First Indian Afghan Empire in India, p. 250
3. A.D. 1570-1628

al-'Āshir.

In the tenth century India we find the Qādirīyah and Chishtiyah orders represented by their branches under the name of Nizāmiyah and Sābirīyah respectively, and both these schools had a number of godly men known for their spirituality and piety. Yet, of a fact, the century belonged to the Shattāriyah order which could be deemed to have taken charge of the spiritual realm from the Chishtiyahs and won over the whole country[1].

The founder of Shattāriyah order was Shaikh 'Abdullah Shattār of Khurāsān who came to India probably in the beginning of the ninth century and settled at Māndū. He died in 832/1429 and was buried within the fort of Māndū. Living like the rich, he attained the higher states of ecstatic rapture and countless people benefited from him. His order spread rapidly in the country but not before it bifurcated into two branches; one of it is traced to Shaikh Muhammad Ghauth (d. 970/1563) of Gwalior with three persons intervening between him and Shaikh 'Abdullah Shattār. The other branch was headed by Shaikh 'Ali b. Qawwām of Jaunpūr (also known as Shaikh 'Ali 'Āshiqān of Sarā'i Mir) with two intervening links connecting him to Shaikh 'Abdullah Shattār. The Shattāri order was perhaps the first to attempt a fusion of *yoga* with

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1. Madāriyah order founded by Shaikh Badī-ud-dīn Madār Makanpūrī (d. 844/1440) also existed in India during that period. The followers of this order publicised in words as well as in deeds the doctrine of Unity of Being by displaying complete dependence on God and abstention from all externality to the extent of wearing only loincloth. With the passage of time the order deteriorated to a sort of syncretistic sect giving rise to such a liberatine conduct by its followers that the word *Madāri* became synonymous with a conjurer. In the tenth century itself the order had lost its appeal to the elite. *Nuzhatul Khwātir's* fourth volume which gives a biographical sketch of all the eminent sufis belonging to different orders, mentions only two sufis associated with the Madāri order of that period.

sufism by adopting practices like meditative postures and suspension of breathing and even the practice of occult sciences. A detailed account of these yogic practices has been given in the *Risāla Shattāriyah*[1] of Bahā-ūd-dīn b. Ibrāhim Ansāri al-Qādrī. Shaikh Muhammad Shattāri's *Kalīd Makhāzin* clearly upholds the Unity of Being alluding to a parallelism between the Shaikh and the Brahmin, and the mosque and the temple, all of which manifest or rather reveal the borrowed fragments of the Divine Being. In his view all the phenomenal objects are inseparable parts of the same Essence of Unity. His description of the doctrine is concluded with a verse which says:

> Smitten with love, a Shattāri he became—
> Comforter of humanity. [2]

In another tract of the same order entitled *Risālah 'Ishqiyah* agnosticism is likened to majesty of love and Islam to the grace of love, followed by a couplet, saying—

> Belief and disbelief, one is nigh to other;
> One without infidelity, is not a believer. [3]

It also goes on to say that:—

> "Knowledge is the greatest veil: its object is worship, yet it is in itself the greatest covering. If this veil of secrecy were to be pulled down, infidelity and Islam would get blended, one with the other, and the real significance of Godhood and worship would come up."[4]

An influential and eminent Shaikh of the Shattārī order was Shaikh Muhammad Ghauth (d. 970/1563) of Gwalior who enjoyed a great popular regard among the masses. His pomp and pride vied with the pageantry of the nobles and grandees of his time. His *jāgīr* or the freehold estate yielded an income of nine hundred thousand rupees annually and he had forty

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1. Nadwatul Ulama Manuscript No. 48, pp.47-49
2. *Kalīd -Makhāzin*, pp.196-99.
3 *Risālah Ishqiyah*, p.71
4 *Ibid.*, p. 73.

elephants besides an army of servants and attendants. Whenever he passed through the markets of Agra, large crowds used to assemble to pay their respect to him. He used to return their salutations kneeling down on his horse which made it difficult for him to sit upright on the horseback. Mullā 'Abdul Qādir Badāūni relates that he had artfully enlisted Emperor Akbar to his spiritual order but the latter somehow got rid of his tutelage. Regardless of his fanfare or rather royal bearings he was renowned for living in absolute poverty like a mendicant. While saluting others, whether a Muslim or a non-Muslim, he used to bend as if in prayer to which an exception was taken by the religious scholars. His writings, particularly, the *Jawāhir Khamsah, M'irājiyah,*[1] *Kanzal-Wāhdah* and *Bahr-al-Hayāt,*[2] became very popular and helped in spreading his order throughout India.

Shaikh 'Ali b. Qawwām Jaunpūri, also known as 'Ali 'Āshiqān of Sirā'i Mīr (d. 955/1548), Shaikh Lashkar Muhammad of Burhānpūr (d.993/1585) and Shaikh Allah Bakhsh of Garh Mukteshwar (d. 1002/1594) were prominent spiritual guides of the time who achieved great popularity among the masses. The biographers of Shaikh 'Ali 'Āshiqān of Sirā'i Mīr are on record that his miraculous deeds outnumber the miracles worked by any other sufi saint since the time of Shaikh 'Abdul Qādir Jilāni.[3] Another distinguished spiritual guide of those days was Shaikh Ziāullah Akbarābādi (d. 1005/1597). He was

1. In this book he laid a claim to ascention which raised a tumult among the circle of scholars in Gujarāt which subsided only when he was vindicated by an eminent scholar, Shaikh Wajīh-ud-dīn Gujarāti who explained away his awkward pretence.

2. The book is a translation of the *Amar Kund.* Muhammad Ikārm writes about it in the *Rod-i-Kauthar:* "This book describes, in Persian, the doctrines and exercises of Hindu yogis. In an earlier work known as the *Jawāhir Khamsa* he had made but a brief mention of these matters. This work throws light on the proximate thoughts of Shattāriyah order and the *yoga* of the Hindus." (pp.24-36)

3. For details see 'Arif Ali's *Al-Āshiqiyah* and *Nuzhatal Khawātir*, Vol. ·A

the son and spiritual successor of Shaikh Muhammad Gauth of Gwalior and had the honour of being taught by 'Allāma Wajīh-ud-dīn. Thirty-five years of his life he spent at Akbarābād, the capital of Emperor Akbar, as the object of people's affection and was several times requested to grace the Emperor's court by his presence. 'Abdul Qādir Badāūnī writes that when he once saluted the Shaikh in the usual manner, he felt slighted and began to jest with him and mocked at him. Badāūnī does not hold a good opinion about him and has shown how he used to play pranks with others.[1]

In addition to these, there were also Shāh 'Abdullah of Sandīla (924-1010 A.H.)[2] and Shaikh 'Isā' b. Qāsim Sindī, a Khalifa or spiritual successor of Lashkar Muhammad 'Arif billah, who was a contemporary of the Mujaddid. Both were prominent Shaikhs of Shattāriyah order.[3] There were still others belonging to other sufi disciplines. One of these was Shaikh Chain-ladah of Sohna[4] (d. 997/1589) who used to impart instruction in sufi tracts such as the *Fasūs* and the *Naqd-un-Nusūs* to his pupils. The Emperor placed great confidence in him but once he saw the Shaikh reciting inverted prayers and turned away from him. Another was Shāh 'Abdur Razzāq (886-949)[5] of Jhanjhana subscribing to the Qādiriyah and Chishtiyah orders. Although a man of learning, he ardently upheld the doctrine of the Unity of Being and wrote several treatises in defence of Shaikh Akbar's ideas on the subject. Yet another mystic of the time, Shaikh 'Abdul 'Azīz Shakarbār (858-975)[6], though blessed with ecstatic transports, placed trust in the Unity of Being. He also used to instruct his disciples in the *Fasūs* and its commentary. He was one

1. See *Muntakhab-ut-Tawārikh*, Vol. III and *Nuzhatul Khawātir*, Vol. V.
2. A.D. 1518-1601.
3. *Nuzhatul Khawātir*, Vol. V.
4. A town in Gurgaon district of the Indian Punjab where there is a spring of hot water.
5. A.D. 1481-1542
6. A.D. 1454-1567

of the maternal forefathers of Shāh Walī Ullah.

This was also the time when distinguished virtues and spiritual perfection of Shaikh 'Abdul Quddūs of Gangoh (d. 944/1537) had imparted a new life to Sābiriyah branch of Chishtiyah order. He believed in the doctrine of Unity of Being and openly preachad it. Shaikh Qutb-ud-dīn Binādil (d. 925/1519) was the chief protagonist of Qalandariyah order at Jaunpūr and Shaikh Kamāl-ud-dīn (d. 971/1564) occupied a distinguished place among the followers of Qādiriyah school at Khaithal in Ambala, and both had popularised their mystic orders. Mujaddid relates his father as telling him about Shaikh Kamāl: "If one were to see from the eyes of heart, one would not find another spiritual guide occupying an exalted position like him in the Qādiriyah order save, of course, Shaikh 'Abdul Qādir."[1] In Oudh Shaikh Nizām-ud-dīn of Amethi alias Bandagī Miān (900-979)[2] was an eminent Shaikh of the Chishtiyah order who scrupulously followed the dictates of the *shari'ah* and the *sunnah* of the Prophet. He used to place reliance on the *Ihyā'ul 'Uloom* along with the *'Awarif* and the *Risālah Makkiyah*. Once he found a man with the *Fasūs*, he took it away from him and gave him another book to read. Musical recitation was a common feature of the order followed by him, but he used to avoid it.[3]

This was the religious and spiritual atmosphere prevailing in the world of Islam, particularly in India, where mystic guides belonging to different sufi orders and with varying levels of spiritual attainments had established their own centres of spiritual guidance for the people. The commonality as well as the elite which were deeply religious, usually attached themselves to one or the other of these teachers of spiritual truth. We have given it here in a bit detail so that one may clearly perceive the aptitudes and inclinations of the people at the time Mujaddid

1. *Zubdatul Muqāmāt*
2. A.D. 1495-1571.
3. *Nazhatul Khawātir*, Vol. IV

was born and the possibilities and difficulties of any revivalist effort in the prevailing atmosphere.

Intellectual Milieu

Tenth century of the Islamic era was not an age of intellectual awakening and creative thought nor any significant addition was made to the thought, science or culture already existing during the period. The keen sense of intellectual curiosity which had rendered Islamic history specially illustrious in the world annals had gradually declined from the second half of the eighth century when we find such sharp-witted scholars as Hāfiz Ibn Taimiyah (d. 728/1328), Taqī-ud-din b. Daqīq al-'Id (d. 702/1303), 'Alā'-ud-dīn al-Bāji (d. 714/1314), Jamāl-ud-dīn 'Abul Hajjāj al-Mizzī (d. 742/1341), Shams-ud-dīn al-Zahabī (d. 748/1347) and Abū Hayyan Nahwī (d. 745/1344) who made valuable contributions to sciences of *hadīth* (Traditions), *kalām* (dialectics), *tārīkh* (history) and *rijāl* (biographies) and produced literature of the highest order. This was the period which witnessed the great Traditionist Ibn Hajr al-'Asqalānī (d. 852/1448) whose monumental work entitled the *Fath al-Bārī*, a commentary on the *Sahīh Bukhāri*, was received as the most perfect work giving finishing touches to the *Sahīh*.

In the tenth century the intellectual pursuits were limited to compilations, reproductions, commentaries and summations of the earlier works. In the beginning of this century there had, however, been such eminent scholars as Shams-ud-dīn Sakhāwī (d. 902/1497) and Jalāl-ud-dīn Suyūtī (d. 911/1505). The former is regarded as one of the greatest scholars of Traditions, biographical notices and history, second only to Shams-ud-dīn al-Zahabī, after whom these disciplines gradually declined. His two works, the *Fath-al-Mughith b'Sharh al-Fiyat-il-Hadīth* on the subject of principles and technical terms of *hadīth* and the *Al-Zau-ul-Lām'e l'ahl al-Qarn al-Tās'e* on the biographical notices are still without a parallel in their fields. Likewise, Suyūtī is the well-known scholar of Islamic history, some of whose

works have the sweep of an encyclopaedia on the subjects covered by them. The first half of the *Tafsīr Jalālain*, written by Suyūtī has all along been studied as a text-book and kept his memory fresh in the minds of educated persons.

In the tenth century *hadīth* and *rijāl* were accorded greater importance by the scholars of Egypt, Syria and Irāq, *mantiq* (logic) and philosophy were the favourite subjects of study in Irān and *fiqah* (jurisprudence) of the Hanafite school constituted the touchstone of scholarly excellence in Turkistān and India. The savants of the time were Ahmad b. Muhammad Qastālānī (d. 923/1517), a commentator of the *Sahīh Bukhāri*, and Shaikh-ul-Islam Zakariyah Ansarī (d. 925/1519) in Egypt; the well-known exegete Abūs Sa'ūd (d. 952/1545) in Turkey; and in Hijaz Ibn Hajr Haitami (d. 974/1566) who had written *As-Sawā'iq al-Muhriqa* along with several other works, and 'Ali Muttaqi (d. 975/1567), the author of the *Kanz-al-'Ummāl*. Another scholar and man of letters was Mullā 'Ali Qārī who was born in Herāt (Afghānistān) but had settled down in Mecca where he taught a large number of students. He died in 1014/1605 but his scholarly endeavours can properly be placed in the tenth century. Qutb-ud-dīn Nahrwalī[1] was also a litterateur and historian who was born in India and died in 990/1582. Famous for his work, the *Al-'Aylām fi Akhbār Bait Allāh al-Harām*, he was venerated by the nobles and sultans of Hajāz and Turkey for his deep learning.

Irān could justly boast of its academicians in the tenth century. There were Jalāl-ud-dīn Dawwānī (d. 918/1512), Mullā 'Imād b. Mahmūd Tārmī (d. 941/1534) and Ghiyāth-ud-dīn Mansūr (d. 948/1541) who were talked about even in India. Among the distinguished scholars who were widely known towards the end of the tenth century, one was Shaikh Muhummad b. As-Shaikh Abī al-Hasan of Egypt. He was known as

1. Anhilāwarā in Gujarāt, arabicised as Nahrwāla, is the ancient name of Pattan. It was captured by Mahmūd of Ghazni in 416/1025.

Al-Ustāz al-'Āzam and Qutb al-'Ā'rifīn. As a teacher in the great University of Al-Azhar, he was famous for shedding new light and elucidating the intricacies of Qurānic texts, *hadīth* and *fiqah*. Apart from being a pedagogue, he was also a poet and a spiritual guide of no mean achievement. He died in 993/1585. Rahmat Ullah b. 'Abdullah Sindhī (d. 994/1586) was also an Indian scholar of Traditions who taught at Mecca during this period. 'Allamā Wajīh-ud-dīn b. Nasr Ullah of Gujarāt was another scholar of this period who taught religious and secular sciences over half a century and brought up many an eminent pedagogue. His disciples continued to impart instruction and enlightenment to others for a hundred years. Wajīh-ud-dīn also belonged to the latter half of this century for he left this fleeting world in 998/1590. Yemen had, during this period, carved out a place for itself in the world of learning. The well-known scholar of *hadīth*, Tāhir b. Husain b. 'Abdur Rahmān al-Ahdāl taught a large number of students there. He died in 998/1590.[1]

The scholars of Irān had, by that time, started coming to India and many of these were pupils of Jalāl-ud-dīn Dawwānī, Mullā 'Imād b. Mahmūd Tārmī and Mīr Giyāth-ud-dīn Mansūr. Maulana Zain-ud-dīn Mahmūd, the bow-maker, who had been a disciple of Maulānā Jāmī and 'Abdul Ghafoor Lārī, had arrived in India during Humāyūn's time and was received with the highest marks of honour by the king. During the reign of Akbar the three brothers, Hakīm Abdul Fath Gilānī, Hakīm Humāyūn *alias* Hakīm Humām and Nūr-ud-dīn Qararī had emigrated from Gilān and attained high positions in the imperial court. After a short while Mullā Muhammad Yazdi arrived from Irān. Amīr Fath Ullah Shīrāzī came after a brief stay at Bījāpūr. An intimate pupil of Mīr Giyāth-ud-dīn Mansūr, he brought the writings of the Irānian scholars to India. He was honoured with the post of Sadr in 993/1586. The curriculum and syllabus then prevalent in India were

1. See *An-Nūr as-Sāfir*, pp.414-439.

deeply influenced by him and these ultimately developed into what later on came to be known as the *Dars-i-Nizāmi*, which still dominates the Arabic madrasas of the country.[1]

We also come across the names of a large number of scholars and men of letters belonging to Nishāpūr, Astarābād, Jurjān, Māzandarān and Gilān in the court annals, specially those of the south Indian kingdoms.[2]

Afghānistan was the land known for its manly arts but it was not altogether destitute of mental cultivation. Qāzī Muhammad Aslam Harwī (d. 1061/1651) who came towards the end of his life's journey to India was born in Herāt and had studied in the land of his birth under Muhammad Fāzil of Badakhshān. Muhammad Ṣādiq Ḥalwā'i was also a distinguished scholar of Afghānistān. Herāt, close to the borders of Irān, was a centre of learning in those days. Qāzī Muhammad Aslam Harwī was one of its eminent scholars. His son Muhammad Zāhid (widely known to Indian scholars as Mīr Zāhid) was a paragon of learning in discursive sciences. His three commentaries known as the *Zawāhid Thalāthā* were, for a long time, keenly studied by the scholars.

Iranian literati and their creations were not the only source of enlightenment to the Indian scholars who were constantly in touch with the scholars of the Qur'ān and *hadīth* in Egypt, Hijāz and Yemen. Shaikh Rājeh b. Dawūd of Gujarāt (d. 904/1499) studied *hadīth* from 'Allāma Sakhāwī who told him about the opinion held by Shaikh al-'Ula al-Bukhārī al-Hanafī in regard to Ibn 'Arabī. He also asked his pupil to warn the scholars of India about the indiscriminate reverence paid by them to Ibn 'Arabī[3]. Sakhāwī has made a mention of his Indian student in the

1. For a detailed account see Hakim S. 'Abdul Ha'i Hasani's *Al-Thaqāfat il-Islāmiyah fil Hind* or its Urdu version entitled *Islami Uloom-o-Funūn Hindustān men*, specially the chapter *Hindustān ka Nisāb-i-Dars*.
2. *Nazhātul Khawātir*, Vol. IV
3. *Ibid*.

Al-Zaū'l-lām'e which shows that he held a very high opinion about the intelligence and learning of Rājeh b. Dawūd. The greatest authority of the time in the science of *hadīth* was Shaikh 'Ali b. Ḥosām-ud-dīn al-Muttaqī, the author of *Kanz-ul-'Ummāl.* The entire world, it is said, lies under an obligation to Suyūti, but Suyūti himself is indebted to 'Ali al-Muttaqı. Abul Hasan As-Shāfe'ī al-Bakrī who taught within the holy precincts of the mosque of K'aba and Shahāb ud-dīn Ahmad b. Ḥajar Makkī, the well-known traditionist and jurisconsult of Mecca had been the teachers of Shaikh 'Ali al-Muttaqī.

These descriptions would have made it clear that the Indian Peninsula, though bounded by lofty mountains and deep oceans, was not intellectually isolated from the outside world. It had maintained contact with other centres of culture and learning through the mountainous and rugged passes of Khaibar and Bolān. It is no doubt true that India had, in the times we are talking about, absorbed and imported to an extent greater than it could itself export and benefit others, but that was only natural for it had received both, the faith and the knowledge, by way of Turkistān and Irān.

Intellectual and Religious Disquietude

This survey of intellectual, religious and educational conditions of the tenth century would, however, remain incomplete without giving an account of the intellectual unrest and religious inconstancy found at certain places both in India and its neighbouring countries. Its description becomes all the more necessary lest one should think that the stream of life was flowing smoothly without any unbroken or unebbing surge for thousands of miles wherein the ship of religious edification and moral and spiritual guidance could go full speed without any danger hidden beneath the surface of water. Had it been so, the efforts made for renovation of faith during the period would have more appropriately been called instruction and edification or preaching of Islam than revival and renaissance. India was situated at a far

off distance from the Islamic cultural centres which happened to be situated in Hijāz, Egypt, Syria and Irāq; Islam had reached this country through a circuitous route *via*, Irān, and Turkistān; neither Arabic was prevalent here nor the knowledge of *hadīth* was common which helps to distinguish aberration and innovation from the right path and impart an understanding of the true faith; great difficulties existed in the journey for *haj* or for receiving higher religious education; and the Muslim minority was socially integrated with a predominantly Hindu society which was firmly wedded to its superstitious beliefs and un-Islamic customs —all these factors had combined to make the Indian Muslims of that period susceptible to erratic calls of non-conformist sects, or, one can say, made the Indian Muslim society an easy hunting ground for religious adventurers.

Aggressive Shi'ism of Iranian origin which took roots at certain places in the South India and Kashmir was but one in a series of such perversions. Burhān Nizām Shāh of Ahmadnagar had, in the middle of the tenth century, adopted Shi'ism under the influence of an Ismā'ilite Shaikh Tāhir b. Rāzī who had been forced to flee from Iran by the Iranian monarch Shāh Ismā'il Safawī. Moved by his intemperate faith, he ordered public cursing of the first three Caliphs, through the streets and the mosques and bazars, especially employed people for this purpose and killed and imprisoned a large number of Sunnites for opposing his sacrilegious acts.[1] Mīr Shams-ud-dīn of Irāq made indefatigable efforts to spread Shi'ism in Kashmir and converted 34,000 Hindus to his faith. It is also reported that he invented a new religion which was called Nūr Bakhshī and wrote a book on the jurisprudence of his faith which differed from the Sunnite law as well as the law of the Imāmiyah sect of Shi'ites. Historians are also on record that a new sect was born in Kashmir which believed that Saiyid Muhammad Nūr Bakhsh was the Mahdī or the

1. *See* the details given by Muhammad Qāsim Bijāpūrī in *Tarikh Firishta*, although the author was himself a Shi'ite.

promised Messiah.[1]

In 950/1543 Humayūn made his way into Persia to seek the help of Shāh Tahmasp who asked Humāyūn to adopt the religious tenets of the Shiāhs. Humāyūn after much ado said, "Bring them written upon a sheet of paper", and just read them out.[2] There is no reliable evidence to show that Humāyūn had abjured his faith, but he must have been impressed by the splendid reception and help he had received in his hour of need from Persia. The benignity should have, however, created a soft corner for Shī'ism in the heart of Humāyūn whose Timurid fore-fathers had been orthodox Sunnīs and some even bound by an oath of allegiance to the saints of Naqshbandiyah order. Humayūn was cultured and considerate with an excess of kindliness, always maintained the state of ablution and never mentioned God and His Apostle without ritual purification. He died on the 15th of Rabī-ul-Awwal 963 A.H.,[3] after he had slipped from the stairs of of his library where he had sat down on hearing the call of the *mu'azzin*.

Among the nobles and grandees of Humāyūn, Bairam Khān was a man of great talents. He was generous and sincere, possessed a goodness of disposition, attended the congregational prayers punctually and paid due reverence to the scholars and saints, but preferred 'Ali, the fourth Caliph, over the first three. In one of his couplets he says:

A king whose tiara surpasses the seven heavens;
if not a slave of 'Alī, let there be dust on his head.

Mīr Sharīf 'Āmlī was a man well-versed in secular sciences. He came to India in the reign of Akbar who received him with kindness and appointed him, first in 993/1585, as the governor of Kābul and then, in 999/1591, as the governor of Bengal. He

1. *See* the details given by Muhammad Qāsim Bijāpūrī in *Tārikh Firishta*, although the author was himself a Shi'ite.
2. *Muntakhab-ut-Tawārikh*, Vol. I, p. 445
3. 26th January, 1551, A.D.

was given freehold lands or *jāgīrs* in Ajmer and Mohān. Khwāfi Khān, author of the *Ma'āsir al-Umarā*, says that, Mīr Sharīf Āmlī had heretic leanings, mixed up philosophy with mysticism and believed in what was called *'Ayniyāt* or glimpse of the Truth.

Two more thought currents fraught with divisive tendencies were extremely detrimental to Islam in India. One of these was the Zikrī doctrine of a sect which believed that on the completion of one thousand years of Islam a new prophethood would show its face. The sect flourished in Baluchistān but according to the millenarian belief of its adherents the prophet of the sect had revealed himself at Attock in 977/1569. The author of the book "*Who are Zikris*," writes about Mullā Muhammad, the founder of this schism :

> "He appeared in a human form, donning the dress of the mendicants, descending from the celestial regions to the earth, on the peak of lofty mountain in Attock at dawn in a monday night of 977/1569."[1]

The Zikrīs regarded Mullā Muhammad as the Seal of the Prophets, the best of all the apostles of God and His essence or *Nūr*, and also, as the first and last of all creation. Another work of the sect known as *Mūsā Nāmah* says :

> "God said, O Moses, I have not sent any Prophet after Mahdī. He will be sent as the light of those who will be born first and in the last."[2]

Several other books, such as, the *M'erāj Nāmah* (Mss.), *Thanā'i Mākdī*, *Safar Nāmah Mahdī* and *Zikr-i-Ilāhī* include passages extolling Mullā Muhammad to a position higher than all the prophets of God including the Prophet of Islam. They also exhibit the ingenuity of their authors in distorting and mis-interpreting or even shamelessly imputing certain sayings to earlier authorities. They had invented an article of faith for their sect, saying: "There is no god but God: Pure light of

1. *Who are Zikris*, p. 13
2. *Ibid.*, p. 118

Muhammad Mahdī, the Prophet of God." They made fun of those who performed prayers and dubbed them as heretics.[1]

They rejected fasting, *haj* and *zakāt* and instead of pilgrimage to the K'aba, deemed it essential to make a pilgrimage to the hill named *Koh-i-Murād.*[2] According to the *Tārīkh-Khawānīn-i-Belūch* the Zikrī sect, which was very hostile to Islam, had gained considerable strength in certain parts of Baluchistān. The followers of this sect executed Muslims on the charge of performing prayers. Mīr Nasīr Khān 'Āzam, who re-introduced the *sharī'ah,* had to struggle hard against the un-Islamic and heretic practices of the Zikrīs. He ultimately succeeded in completely destroying this heretical sect after fighting many a sanguine battle against them.[3]

The other sect giving faith to certain doctrines of dubious nature was Roshanā'iyah. Its role in trying to arrest the decline of Afghān political power and to check the growing influence of the Mughals raises issues that demand re-examination of the allegations made by the writers of those times.[4] How far this schism was politically motivated and what historical facts support this view are some of the issues requiring a deeper study. There is, however, a great divergence between the statements of its adherents and opponents. One calls the founder of the sect as the 'Saint of Light' while the other nicknames him as the 'Saint

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1. *'Aitaqād Nāmah* (Mss.)
2. The writings of the Zikrīs, such as, *Zikr-i-Tauhīd, I am a Zikrī, Tafsīr Zikr Allah* and other works cited in the text may be seen for details. District Gazetteer of Baluchistān (p. 116) brings out the differences between their beliefs and those of the Sunnites.
3. See the article by Maulānā 'Abdul Haq, Principal Dārul 'Uloom, Turbat, Baluchistān, appearing in the *Al-Haq*' (1979 issue) and another article giving detailed account of the Zikri faith in Januray, 1980 issue of the *Al-Haq*.
4. Taking into account the extraordinary popularity of the sufis during that period, certain writers have expressed the view that the movement was started to organise the Pathāns under a religious garb in order to fight the Mughals and recapture the lost glory of the Afghāns.

of Darkness'. The founder of the sect was one Bā Yazīd Ansārī, also known as Pīr Roshan (*i. e.*, the Saint of Light), and his father's name was 'Abdullah. Born at Jālandhar in 931/1524 (that is, a year before Bābur established his rule in India), he remained neglected throughout his youthful years owing to family dissensions, and thus he could not complete his education. In one of his travels, as reported by some, he met one Sulaimān Ismā'īli and spent sometime with the Hindu yogis. As his biographers relate he began to have visions in sleep and heard celestial voices. He engaged himself in *Zikr Khafī* (silent remembrances) and after sometime was lost in repeating the *Ism-i-'Āzam* (the Exalted name of God). When he completed forty years of age he heard a mysterious voice telling him to give up the ritual purity demanded by the *sharī'ah* and to perform the prayers like the prophets of God instead of the usual prayers of the Muslims.[1] Thereafter he started to look down others as polytheists and hypocrites. He also began spending his time in devotions extending to forty days' solitary seclusion. It was then that he was commanded to preach openly. It is also alleged that he laid a claim to being Mahdī or the promised Messiah who received revelations from God.[2] The number of his followers increased gradually and he appointed some of them as his deputies in order to preach his tenets.

The doctrines that Shaikh Bā Yazīd has himself mentioned in the *Sirāt-ut-Tauhīd* seem to be the outcome of an excessive reliance on mysticism as well as his own self-complacency which are not unoften found in those who want to go ahead with vigils and devotions on the path of spiritual flight unaided by an experienced guide but have little knowledge of the Qur'ān and the

1. But Shaikh Bā Yazīd has written in the *Maqsood ul-Mūminīn* that the *sharī'ah* is like the bark of a tree without which the tree would not last. (*Maqsood ul-Mūminīn*, p. 444. Punjab University MSS.
2. Shaikh Bā Yazīd has, however, denied that he was Mahdī. His denial appears in the verbal contest between him and Qāzī Khān of Kābul. (*Ibid).*

sunnah. The book also contains certain other dogmas and directions which are more probably his regulations for waging war, perhaps, formulated during the period when he was leading an armed conflict against the Mughals and his rival Afghān tribes.

A number of Afghān tribes around Peshāwar joined the Shaikh as his followers. He started preaching his doctrines to the Mahmand tribe and thereafter he gained adherents among the Baluchis and Sindhis. He was stoutly opposed by the scholars and mystics of other schools yet his success in extending his sphere of influence was phenomenal. Shaikh Bā Yazīd deputed emissaries and missionaries to the neighbouring lands and their nobles and rulers, and one even called upon Akbar also. He spent two and a half years fighting the Mughals and, at last, died at Kālā Pāni in 980/1572. He was buried in Hashtnagar. Three of his works, the *Khair ul-Bayān*, *Maqṣood ul-Mūminīn* and *Sirāt-ut-Tauhid* are still extant which give the creed and dogmas of his sect. The *Khair ul-Bayān* and *Maqṣood ul-Mūminīn* were regarded by his followers as something like the sacred texts. Ākhund Darwīzah, a disciple of Saiyid 'Ali Tirmizi *alias* Pīr Bābā (d. 991/1583), was the chief adversary of Shaikh Bā Yazīd. He wrote the *Makhzan ul-Islām* to refute the teachings of Shaikh Bā Yazīd Ansārī. The Shaikh also wrote an autobiography under the title of the *Hāl Nāmah Pir Dastagīr* which has been compiled with certain additions by 'Ali Muhammad Mukhlis. Broken by continuous internal dissensions and armed conflict with their opponents as well as relentless opposition of the religious scholars, the followers of Roshanā'iyah sect were scattered in different parts of India. Their numbers gradually decreased and ultimately the sect disappeared in India.[1]

Mirzā Naṣr ullah Khān Fidāī Daulat Yār Jang, author of the *Dastān Turktāzān-i-Hind* writes about the Roshanā'iyah sect:

1. *See* the article on Roshanā'iyah by Dr. Muhammad Shaf'ī in *Dairatul Ma'ārif Islamiyah* (Urdu), Vol. IV.

"Roshnā'ī was the name given to the sect founded by a man belonging to India whose name was Bā Yazīd. He laid a claim to prophethood among the Afghāns, assuming the title of *Paighambar-i-Roshnā'ī* or the Enlightened Prophet, and enlisted some of them as his followers who gave up paying homage to the divine revelations and praying to God. His statements and observations indicate that he had given his faith to the doctrine of *Wahdat-ul-Wujud.*[1] He believed that nothing exists save the Necessarily Existant One. He paid tribute to the Prophet of Islam (on whom be peace and blessings of God) and prophesised that the day was not far away when the entire world would acknowledge his prophethood.

"The *Hālnāmah* written by Bā Yazīd shows that he was a recipient of revelations which were brought to him by Gabriel; God had honoured him with apostleship; and he regarded himself to be a prophet. He offered prayers but did not consider it necessary to do so facing the *qiblah.* He invoked the Quranic verse, *Whichever way ye turn is the face of God,* in his support. He did not consider it necessary to take a bath with water and regarded the killing of his adversaries as permissible."[2]

The author of the *Dastān Turktāzān-i-Hind* has also cited certain utterances of Bā Yazīd. Some of these being gnostic reflections are not reproachful but there are still others plainly un-Islamic and reprehensible. He writes:

"He attached the greatest importance to self-reliance and God-awareness. If he found a Hindu with a greater sense of self-reliance, he preferred him over a Muslim. He levied *jizyah* on the Muslims along with *khums* or one-fifth of the property as a tax which was assigned to the public treasury

1. There was nothing novel in it at least in those days for a majority of Indian mystics had faith in this doctrine.
2. pp. 304-305

for being spent on the poor and the needy. All of his sons abstained from sins and profanity and cruelty. He had written several books in Arabic, Persian, Hindi and Pashtu. One of his works entitled *Khair-ul-Bayān* was in all the four languages and was, as he believed, a sacred scripture containing direct divine revelations to him."[1]

Events reported by the contemporary historians show that Shaikh Bā Yazīd had collected a considerable force of the Afghāns and operating from his centre in the Sulaimān hills, he had captured the Khaibar Pass. He also started raiding the surrounding country. Akbar despatched an expedition to crush the rebellion but it did not succeed in achieving its objective. After Bā Yazīd's death, his sons continued to pose danger to the Mughal empire. Rājā Mān Singh, Bīrbal and Zain Khān, all failed to humble the Roshnā'iyahs and Bīrbal was even killed in an encounter with them. Mān Singh, too, failed to crush the Roshnā'iyahs in an offensive launched by him in 995/1587. The insurgence of the sect was finally suppressed during the reign of Shāh Jahān in 1058/1648.

Mahdawis

At this period the greatest unrest was caused by the Mahdawī movement whose founder, Saiyid Muhammad b. Yūsuf of Jaunpūr (born in 847/1443), had died in the beginning of the tenth century (910/1504) but its aftereffects were visible until the close of that century. A dispassionate study of the history of this movement is sure to convince any one that no religious movement of the time had shaken the Muslim society of the Indian sub-continent, including Afghānistān, so deeply and comprehensively as did the Mahdawī thought for two or three hundred years after its inception. Contemporaneous writings and accounts left by the writers and historians of the later times, both for and against

1. Cited by Mullā Muhsin Khāni, *Hālnāmah Bā Yazid Dar Bustān-i-Mazāhib*, pp. 306—309

this movement, lead to the conclusion that:

(1) Saiyid Muhammad of Jaunpūr was one of those who are born with an inner strength of spirit and fire of a genius after a long time. From his youthful days he was courageous and brave, dissatisfied with the shape of things around him and being rigidly puritan he was ever willing to admonish any one whom he found doing an act which he regarded as unlawful or irreligious. He was honoured, at that time, with the title of *Asad al-'ulamā'* i.e., the lion among the scholars. He was guided in his spiritual edification by Shaikh Dāniāl[1], and took to vigils and devotions in the solitude of hills for a fairly long time. The spiritual exercises if undertaken by a novice unattended by a guide, often lead to misinterpretation of mystic symbols and mental images. A traveller of spirit who has not attained the place of nearness and discernment is always liable to misunderstand a word or symbol and this is what appears to have happened with Saiyid Muhammad. Thus, he declared himself to be the promised Mahdī in one of his journeys and later on called upon the people to give their faith to his claim.

(2) His litanies coupled with inner spiritual strength and the zeal to command the right and forbid the impermissible had given him a charisma that enabled him to influence and inspire his audience. No matter whether one was a commoner or a king, one became so spellbound by his sermons that one willingly left the hearth and home, riches and position at his bidding. People accompanied him to become his disciples or placed themselves entirely at his disposal. This was what happened with Ghiyāth-ud-dīn Khiljī at his capital in Māndū and with the ruler of Gujarāt, Mahmūd Shāh at Jāpānīr. At Ahmadnager, Ahmadābād, Bidar and Gulbarga thousands of persons gave themselves up to him and

1. Unfortunately nothing is to be found about him in the biographical and other Sufi literature.

accompanied him in a procession. During his visit of Sind, he touched the hearts of the people so powerfully that large numbers seemed to be swelled with emotion. His haranguings at Qandhār almost caused a trepidation in the whole population and even the governor Mirza Shāh Beg felt attracted to him.

(3) His was a life pure and chaste, of frugal living and abstinence and of complete trust in God—a picture of heavenly severance of all worldly relationships. One could see the same litanies and devotions and the same austerities and selfless sacrifices whether he was in a camp or a cantonment. Whatever victuals were available, they were distributed equally to all without the least consideration to any one. He would himself accept a share equal to others. This, naturally made an impact upon everyone.

(4). He had several disciples, the promoters of his mission, who were absolutely sincere, fearless and devoted to his cause. Some of them were brave enough to speak the truth to the face of autocrat kings; some endured severe hardships in enforcing the lawful and checking what was unlawful or irreligious; and some even welcomed the gallows for the sake of their mission. Anybody going through their biographies cannot but acknowledge the wholesome influence Saiyid Muhammad Jaunpūrī had exerted on these persons.

To cite an example here, Shaikh 'Ala' b. Hasan of Bayānah also known as Shaikh 'Alā'ī (d. 957/1550) was courageous enough to ask Sultān Salīm Shāh Sūrī to tread the path chalked out by Islam. On arriving in the royal court he saluted the monarch in the usual manner instead of undergoing the elaborate court etiquette. On a second occasion when he was tired and sick he risked incurring the displeasure of the king and was scourged. He fell as dead and then his delicate body was tied to the feet of an elephant and trampled to pieces on the streets of the

royal camp.[1]

(5) Saiyid Muhammad's summons for betaking the path of righteousness had five ingredients. These were abstinence from all worldly pleasures and belongings; severance of all connections with the people; migration from one's home; keeping the company of elevated souls; and continuous recollection of God. Saiyid Muhammad also considered the vision of Divine Essence whether in full consciousness or in a dream or in the form of an illumination of the heart as an essential pre-requisite to one's faith.

(6) Saiyid Muhammad, however, gave expression to certain impressions and assumptions, either during ecstatic transports or due to his mistaken interpretation of spiritual symbols and mental images witnessed in his rapturous moods, which turned his followers into a separate sect, distinct and divergent from the rest of the Muslims. Notwithstanding his sincerity and praisworthy zeal for the faith, his teachings were easily exaggerated by his more zealous adherents and formulated in the shape of a creed which ran counter to the beliefs of the majority of *Ahl-Sunnat* Muslims. His followers glorified Saiyid Muhammad to the extent of equating him with the prophets of God; some accorded him a place even higher than the prophets; while the zealots among them extolled him to the level of the holy Prophet of Islam even though they did not deny that the Saiyid was an adherent of Islam and its Prophet. There were others among the followers of Saiyid Muhammad who declared that if anything contrary to the practice of their leader was found in the Qur'ān and the Traditions, it need not be accepted. Similarly, the confidence in the vision of Divine light whether in a dream or in the state of consciousness was magnified to the extent that any

1. *Nuzhatul Khawātir*, Vol. IV, and *Muntakhabut Tawārikh*, Vol. I, p. 524. Maulana Abul Kalām Āzād has in his usual powerful diction narrated the story in a touching manner in the *Tazkirah* (pp. 53-61).

Muslim who was unable to attain that state was declared outside the fold of Islam. The breach between Mahdawīs and the Muslims became wider with the passage of time and, at last, the former assumed the position of a distinct sect, different and separate from the rest of the Muslims. Thus, the very purpose with which its founder had perhaps preached his doctrines eventually came to nothing.

Mahdawīs were able to maintain their power and influence upto the middle of the tenth century, specially in Deccan where they presided over more than one kingdom. The popularity of the cult and its potency is revealed by the events during the reign of Ismā'īl Nizām Shāh (996-998)[1] of Ahmadnagar. When he was raised to the throne as a minor, all power was usurped by Jamāl Khān. Taking the affairs of the state in his hand Jamāl Khān converted the young potentate to his creed and, within a short period, the Mahdawīs from all parts of the country assembled around him. With a force of Mahdawis numbering 10,000 Jamāl Khān established his control over the Nizām Shāhī kingdom and persecuted both the orthodox Sunnīs and the heterodox Shī'as. Burhān Nizām Shāh, on his return to Ahmadnagar in 998/1590, defeated Jamāl Khān and re-established the Shī'ite kingdom.[2]

The Mahdawī movement began to show visible signs of decline by the end of the tenth century. The extravagant claims of its founder and the excesses committed by its fanatical followers had given birth to an unrest in the Indian Muslim society. The learned scholars with an insight in the teachings of the Qur'ān and the way of the Prophet were perturbed by the new schism which was to them nothing short of a foreboding for a new mischief and heresy. The greatest scholar of the age, Muhammad Tāhir of Pattan (913-986)[3], the author of the *Majm'a Bahār ul-Anwār*, declared under an oath that he would not put on his turban until he

1. A.D. 1588-90
2. *Cambridge History of India*, Vol. IV, pp. 461-2
3. A.D. 1507-1578

had completely rooted out the false doctrine which had overrun the whole of Gujarāt. When Akbar conquered Gujarāt in 980/1573 and met Muhammad Tāhir, he promised to liquidate the new sect. At the same time he wound the turban on the head of Muhammad Tāhir requesting him to leave the affair of Mahdawīs to him. Akbar appointed Mirza 'Azīz-ud-dīn, his foster brother, to the governorship of Gujarāt during whose time Mahdawīs were subdued but when 'Abdur Rahīm Khān Khānān replaced 'Azīz-ud-dīn as the governor of Gujarāt, the Mahdawīs again managed to regain their influence. Taking off his turban again, Muhammad Tāhir took the way to the capital but the Mahdawīs pursued the scholar and killed him by the time he reached Ujjain.[1]

Causes of Unrest

The annals of the time as well the lesson learnt from experience show that intellectual unrest and mental chaos of the type we have described and aggressive reaction to the existing order of things are usually products of complex factors which are detailed here:—

(1) A marked contradiction between the accepted ideas and practices, the faith and the morals, always gives rise to dissatisfaction and irritation in the minds of persons more thoughtful and sensitive than others. This dichotomy normally takes the shape of a revolutionary call or movement to do away with the apparant disharmony; but, if it is not potent enough to do so, it is overtaken by a scepticism which soon becomes extremist and aggressive and, in a weak and sickly social order, creates even a greater confusion of thought endangering its stability.

The abundance of wealth, hankering after rank and status and the mad rush for laying one's hands on both had, in the tenth century, brought up a class of worldly-minded opportunists who would sacrifice every moral and religious

1. *Nuzhatul Khawātir*, Vol. IV

norm to achieve their ends. The class with these inclinations normally comes to the fore in times of peace and prosperity when powerful kingdoms come to have authority over extensive dominions. During the last years of Sūrī dynasty and specially after the establishment of Mughal rule in India, it seems, the social and economic life of the society had produced conditions favourable to the lesser minds hankering after wealth and power. Many well-known injunctions of the *sharī'ah* were violated and un-Islamic practices had come into vogue.[1] Hasan Basrī (d. 110/728), the great reformer of the first century, used to call such seekers of power and pelf who were conspicuous during the hay-day of Umayyad and Abbāsid Caliphates, as hypocrites.

(2) When autocratic rulers become the source of all power and authority, their highhandedness, insolent behaviour and open violation of the religious injunctions as well as shameful indulgence in pleasures of flesh normally force the reformers, having courage and sincerity, to launch a revolutionary movement or to take up arms against the rulers.

(3) Conventions and formalities, when taken to the extremes, give rise to intellectual and moral decadence in a society which becomes stagnant in its thought and culture.[2]

1. Some of the details given by the historians as, for example, Saiyid Hāshmī Farīdābādī in the *Tārikh Hind* (Vol. III, p. 40) cite the instances of such un-Islamic practices. During the reign of Sultān Salīm Shāh, who ascended the throne with the title of Islām Shāh, all the officials and nobles used to come together every Friday in the District (Sarkār) headquarters where the shoes of king were placed on a chair under a canopy, before which all those present used to stand and bow their heads in reverence. Thereafter the compilation of royal edicts was read out to all.

2. Professor Khalīq Ahmad Nizāmī writes in the *Salātīn Dehlī ke Mazhabī Rujhānāt* (p. 451) that the social and moral condition of the Muslims was, on the whole, sinking fast. The fables presented in the literary

(Continued on next page)

The educational system becomes lifeless and unrealistic and loses the capacity to impart satisfaction to the mental quest. It is then that the people find an answer to their searchings in those movements which, rightly or wrongly, dare to go beyond the limited sphere of conventionalism. An important reason or rather an inducement to take this course is the disregard to the teachings of the Scripture and the Prophet. Ignorance of *hadīth* is another cause for it is the surest means for knowing the true spirit of religion in every time and clime as well as the chasm existing between the morals and behaviour of the time and those of the Prophet and his companions.

(4) Absence of a religious leader who is mentally, morally and spiritually superior to others and possesses an attractive personality, who can set at rest the seething minds and hearts and re-strengthen the decaying social order by imparting a new conviction in the abiding nature of Islam and its *sharī'ah* as well as in the vast possibilities of progress and development of man through these God-given blessings is yet another reason for fomenting discontentment.

A study of the history, biographies, discourses and other records pertaining to the tenth century shows that the conditions giving rise to intellectual unrest and disquietitude of spirit were far more apparant at the time in India and that is why we find them more pronounced at that time than in the earlier centuries.

(Concluded)

masterpieces of the times—*Afsānā-i-Shāhān* and the *Tārikh Dāwūdi*—domonstrate moral degradation and overcredulous attitude of the people. Riotous living of the friars, self-indulgence of the students, blind faith in charms and amulets, stories of jinn and fairies and Solomon's lamp could never have been so conspicuous in a healthy society with a sound moral grounding. In fact, the Mahdawi movement was but an effort to get rid of that intellectual decadance and religious stagnation.

CHAPTER II

THE GREATEST TUMULT OF THE TENTH CENTURY

Advent of a New Order

The tenth century of the Islamic era had also assumed importance since at the close of it Islam was to complete one thousand years and to enter into a new millennium. Ordinarily there was nothing of significance in this event; just as every new century begins with the expiry of a previous one, the noiseless foot of time was stepping into a new millennium after another thousand years. But, at a time when the minds were seething with restlessness and the beliefs were shaken; the teachings of the Scripture were not only ignored but detested; speculations of the Greek philosophers were taken as the acme of wisdom and intellectual perfection, and lauded as the 'Radiant Skyline' of wisdom; when mountains made out of molehills were regarded as great achievements in the circles of the educated and the pedagogues; prophetic guidance, divine Scriptures, revelations and injunctions of the *sharī'ah* were mocked at and reliance on

them was dubbed as ignorance and unsophistication; when the disaffection with the then political system, trying to justify every iniquity and injustice on religious grounds, was about to burst forth in an open revolt; and, to cap it all, when a few ambitious and self-seeking persons, endowed with intelligence and learning, had set their eyes upon improving the occasion by posing as harbingers of a new era like the great founders of religion, then, of course, there could have been no better and well-timed opportunity than the close of Islam's first millennium. These men with vaulting ambition held the advent of Islam as the beginning of the most perfect and successful era in human history and, therefore, its coming to an end with the first millennium offered them a golden opportunity which, once lost, would never have been available to them.

In taking a look at the different parts of Islamic world during the second half of the tenth century we shall have to pay particular attention to Irān, the area inhabited by a people with a restless disposition and creative intellect and which, for reasons more than one, can be called the Greece of the East. For here we find the genesis of the idea that with the approaching end of the first millennium and beginning of the second, the manifestation of a Renovator of Faith promised in the Traditions at the close of every century, must occur in the shape of a great personality: the Promulgator of a new religion rather than a renovator or reformer, who would convert the whole world to his faith. There had, infact, been a few aspiring fellows who had tried to figure in the list of this exalted office. One can only express his disappointment at the chronicles of the time which, like other court annals of the times past, revolve round the kings and emperors, grandees and nobles, and their fastidious tastes and pleasures, but hardly give any details to form an estimate of the thoughts and leanings, emotions, desires and fancies of the common people. If we were to lay our hands on a history of the intellectual thought of those times, it would have told us how the advent of the second millennium had set the hearts of many an

enthusiast on spurs and how several of them had started building castles in the air.

The Safawid dynasty had utilised its power and prestige to firmly establish Shī'aism as the faith of Irān. Shaikh Ṣafī-ud-dīn, the progenitor of those who founded the Safawid dynasty, was a noted mystic, but owing to the little interest Shi'aism had with the spiritual thought and culture known as sufism, the discipline was destroyed once for all notwithstanding the great contribution made by Irān through some of the greatest mystics of their time, such as, Imām Ghazzālī of Tūs, Shaikh Farīd-ud-dīn 'Attār of Nishāpūr, Maulānā Jalāl-ud-dīn Rūmī[1], Maulānā 'Abdul Rahmān Jāmī and others—all of whom had hailed from Irān. The country had also been the source of spreading spiritual light to Baghdād, Delhi and Ajmer through its sons like Shaikh 'Abdul Qādir Jīlānī, Shaikh Shahāb-ud-dīn Suhrawardī, Shaikh Mu'in-ud-dīn Chishtī and Khwājā Qutb-ud-dīn Bakhtiyār Kākī. Irān had also been a great centre of learning for *hadīth* and had produced such talented scholars as Muslim b. al-Hajjāj al-Qushairī of Nishāpūr, Abū 'Isā Tirmidhī, Abū Dāwūd of Sajistān, Ibn Mājah of Qazwīn and Hāfiz Abū 'Abdur Rahmān Nissā'ī, but it had lost its invaluable patrimony of learning in the fields of Scripture and Prophet's Traditions. Instead, it had directed its attention to the philosophy and logic of the Greeks. Thus, the revolution which had already severed its rapport with the companions of the Prophet and his *sunnah*, had cooled down if not completely numbed Irān's intellectual vigour for upholding the finality of prophethood, and shaken its conviction in the abiding nature of Islam's vitality. Had not Shi'aism based its creed on devotion to the Prophet's household, it would have more probably reverted to the pre-Islamic thoughts and culture of Rustam and Isphandiyār and the creed of Zarathustra.

It was, therefore, not at all an unexpected development that

1. He belonged to Balkh in Khurāsān, an Iranian province; now in Afghanistān.

Irān gave birth, at that time, to a number of anti-Islamic concepts and philosophies. One of these, more developed and logically articulated, was the Nuqtawi movement which, by the way, offers a good example of the restless spirit of Irān which has manifested itself, from time to time, in the shape of Mazdak and Mānī and Hasan b. Sabbāh. The Nuqtawī movement was completely atheistic in its make up, however. Iskandar Munshī writes about the Nuqtawīs:

> "The sect believes, like the philosophers of antiquity, that the universe is eternal and rejects resurrection of human beings and requital on the Day of Judgement. In its estimation the pleasures and sufferings of the worldly life stand for the heaven and hell awarded to a man in return for his good or evil actions.[1]"

Shāh Nawāz Khān, another historian of the time, says:

> "The science of *nuqta*[2] is another name of atheism and infidelity, libertinism and freethinking. Like the philosophers of antiquity, its adherents admit the enternity of the universe and deny requital and the Day of Judgement. The ease and difficulty encountered in the wordly life are taken by them as the reward and punishment for the righteous and wrongful acts".[3]

They accepted the theory of evolution and believed that the inorganic matter and plants blossomed into human beings through a process of growth and gradual development.[4] God had nothing to do, in their opinion, with the growth of vegetables for it was merely the systematic action of the elements and influence of the stars which made them grow.[5] They said that the Qur'ān

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1 *Tārīkh 'Ālam 'Ārā'i 'Abbāsi*, Vol. II, p. 325
2. Meaning cipher or zero.
3. *Ma'āthir ul-'Umarā*, Vol. II, p. 619
4. *Dabistān-i-Mazāhib*, p. 300
5. *Muballigh ur-Rijāl*, MSS Maulānā Āzād Collection, p. 254, Maulānā Āzād Library, Muslim University, Aligarh.

was the creation of the Prophet while the *shar'iah* was nothing but the expression of formal judgements by the jurists according to their own lights. They made a mockery of prayers, *haj* and sacrifice,[1] and dubbed *Ramadhān* as a month of hunger and thirst. They rediculed the rules pertaining to purification and bathing,[2] and rejected that there were any prohibited degrees for contracting marriages. They discarded the things authoritative and textual but commended rationalism.[3]

The founder of this sect was one Mahmūd of Basākhwān[4]. The sect had thousands of adherents in India and Irān during the tenth century. The Nuqtawīs believed that the 8,000 years since the beginning of the world to the birth of Mahmūd was an era of Arab glory because the prophets of God were born among them alone during all these years.

The leadership of the Arabs, they said, ended with the advant of Maḥmūd[5] and for the next eight thousand years there would be prophets from amongst the Irānians alone.[6]

1. *Muballigh ur-Rijāl*, MSS Maulānā Āzād Collection, p. 25A Maulānā Āzād Library, Muslim University, Aligarh
2. *Ibid*
3. For further details *see* Prof. Mohammdd Aslam's *Dīn Ilāhi aur us;:ā Pas Manzar*; Dr. Nazir Ahmad's *Tārikhī wa Adabī Mutāl'e*; and the *Nuqatiyān ya Pusākhwān* by Dr. Sādiq Kiyā.
4. Mahmūd of Basākhwān first summoned the people to his new faith in 800/1398, at Astrābād, and died in 832/1429. Thus, the sect was founded in the beginning of the ninth century and gradually became popular. During the tenth and eleventh centuries it had thousands of adherents in Irān and India. Irānian and other Muslim historians describe them as apostates and believers in transmigration. According to Mahmūd the beginning of everything was the atom of earth, that is, the *nuqtah*. He tried to give a new interpretation to the Quranic verses in the light of his belief in the *nuqtah* or the numericals and ciphers, and that is why the sect is called Nuqtawi or the people of *nuqtah (See* Dr. Nazeer Ahmad's *Tārikhi wa Adabi Mutāl'e).*
5. A couplet of Mahmūd or one of his followers says:
   For the prodigals who are saved, the turn has come.
   When Arabia railed at Iran, the day will never return.
6. *Dabistān-i-Mazāhib*, p. 301

The convictions of the Nuqtawaīs, described here briefly, had an unusual significance, specially in the context of the reformist movement we are going to discuss; for, it claimed that "Islam having been revoked, everyone had to accept the religion of Mahmūd" and that "Islam having run out its life's duration, a new religion was the need of the time.[1]" The very fact that this doctrine was preached at the time when the end of first millennium was approaching shows that the propagators of this faith intended to intensify their efforts with the start of the second millennium. Shāh 'Abbās Safawī had eliminated thousands of Nuqtawīs charged with heresy; he had taken an attitude more stern than his predecessors for he regarded them as the most dangerous renegades. In 1002/1594 Shāh 'Abbās ordered a general massacre of the Nuqtawīs which forced a large number of them to seek the safety of India. One of them was Hayātī Kāshī who, after serving a term of two years' imprisonment, first went to his home town of Shirāz and thereafter migrated to India in 986/1578. He was reported to be present at Ahmadnagar in 993/1585. Another eminent scholar who occupied an important position among the followers of the sect, was Sharīf 'Āmlī. Distressed by the intolerable conditions in Irān he had also fled to India. Akbar used to render honour to this man as if he was his spiritual mentor. As certain scholars have written, Sharīf 'Āmlī brought proofs from the writings of Mahmūd of Basākhwān to convince Akbar that the time was ripe for him to call the people to his new faith. The writings of Mahmūd he had produced are reported to have predicted that in the year 990/1582 a certain person would eliminate irreligion and establish the true faith.

Both Badāūnī and Khawāja Kalān[2] are in agreement that after his departure from Irān, Sharīf 'Āmlī first sought asylum in the monastery of Maulānā Muhammad Zāhid of a Balkh, a

1. *Dabistān-i-Mazāhib*, p. 300
2. His name was Khwāja 'Ubaid Ullah, and he was the son of Khwāja Bāqī Billāh. He wrote the *Mublligh ur-Rijāl*.

nephew of the great Shaikh Husain of Khwārism, and lived there like a friar. But as he had little of the darvish in him he set on foot abundance of vain talk and senseless blasphemy, so that when Muhammad Zāhid came to know of his beliefs he turned Sharīf 'Āmlī out of his monastery. Thereafter Sharīf 'Āmlī came to Deccan.

Deccan had, in those days, several Shi'ite kingdoms. There he was received with honour for the people took him to be a Shi'a scholar, but when they came to know of his persuasion, they also turned against him. Referring to the incident Badāūnī says that "the rulers of the Deccan wished to cleanse the tablet of existence of his image, but eventually he was set on a donkey and shown about the city in disgrace."[1]

Appointing him as a commander of one thousand, Akbar included Shaikh 'Āmlī among his courtiers. A possessor of the four degrees of the Divine Faith[2] promulgated by Akbar, he was sent as a missionary to Bengal for summoning faithful followers of *Dīn Ilāhī* to these degrees of Akbar's faith. He also deputised for the Emperor before the followers of His Majesty's religion.[3] The author of *Ma'āthir-ul-Umarā* says: "he mixed up mysticism and positive facts with heresy and infidelity, subscribed to the doctrine: *Everything is He;* and called everything a God".[4] Abul Fazl 'Allāmī is also reported to have been swayed, according to some of the contemporary historians, by the Nuqtawī movement. When Shāh 'Abbās Safawī got executed Mīr Saiyid Ahmad Kāshī, a prominent leader of the Nuqtawīs, a letter written to him by Abul Fazl was found in his papers. Iskander Munshī, a historian of Abul Fazal's time writes in the

1. *Muntakhabut Tawārikh*, Vol. II, p. 253
2. The four degrees of Faith, according to Akbar, consisted in one's readiness to sacrifice four things; life, property, religion and honour for the Emperor.
3. *Muntakhabut Tawārikh*, Vol. II, p. 243
4. *Ma'āthir ul-Umarā'* Vol. III, p.285

Tārikh 'Ālam Ārā'i 'Abbāsī :

"It has been learnt from the people visiting India that Abul Fazl, son of Shaikh Mubārak, one of the scholars of India and a trusted courtier of Akbar, is a follower of this religion. He has made Akbar latitudinarian who has given up the path of *sharī'ah.* The letter of Abul Fazl addressed to Mīr Ahmad Kāshī, which was found among the papers of the aforesaid Mīr, testifies that he was a Nuqtawī."[1]

Khawāja Kalān also says while discussing Mahmūd of Basākhwān and his religion in the *Mublligh-ur-Rijāl,* that "Shaikh Abul Fazl of Nāgor imported that destructive doctrine into India."[2]

These documentary evidences sufficiently demonstrate how the Nuqtawīs had conspired to prepare the ground for a new religion to take the place of the old one at the beginning of the second millennium: the new era and the new faith were, it seems, in search of an anointed leader who could preside over the newfound kingdom; and there was none better suited than the Emperor Akbar to fill in that role.

1. Cited from *Tārikhi and Adabi Mutāl'e* by Dr. Nazir Ahmad, p. 261
2. *Mublligh ur-Rijāl,* p.31. For further details also *see* pp. 32-33.

CHAPTER III

AKBAR'S RULE

THE CONTRASTING CLIMAXES

The Religious Period

All the historians of Akbar's reign are in agreement that Akbar began his rule as an orthodox Muslim, or rather with an excess of religious frenzy akin to blind faith. A few incidents related by Mullā 'Abdul Qādir Badāūnī (d. 1004/1595), have been taken from the *Muntakhabut-Tawārikh* to show that Akbar was, like his forefathers, a strict Muslim. With no religious education or, for that matter, any education at all, and living in an age when the excessive veneration of the tombs of saints was a common feature, Akbar used to undertake long journeys for the purpose, punished those who showed disbelief or expressed views contrary to the accepted articles of faith, presented offerings at the shrines of saints, spent a part of the day in recollection of God, kept company of the scholars and saintly persons and attended spiritual concerts.

We do not see any harm in citing Mullā 'Abdul Qādir Badāūnī in support of Akbar's religious zeal. These statements

of Badāūnī, many of which find confirmation in the accounts of Nizām-ud-dīn and Abul Fazl, have something nice to say about Akbar and no historian has ever criticised them for containing even a veiled reprehension to the king. There was, in fact, no reason for Badāūnī to cry down Akbar's religiosity of the initial period. We shall, however, refrain from invoking Budāūnī's testimony in regard to the later part of Akbar's rule when he was engaged in preaching the *Dīn Ilāhī* and unity of all religions, and insulting the precepts of Islam for demonstrating his catholicity, since the authenticity of Badāūnī's statement about that period have, of late, been challenged by certain historians[1]. Wherever we shall refer to Būdāūnī for the later period of Akbar's rule, we shall do it only when his statement is supported by the assiduous courtiers and historians eager to preserve and extol the dignity of their master.

Now, let us see what *Muntakabut Tawārkīh* has to say about the earlier religious zeal of Akbar:

"The Emperor set out to pay a vow of thanks for the

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1. The campaign launched in the recent past to discredit Mullā 'Abdul Qādir Badāūnī's *Muntakhabut Tawārikh* by attributing his statements to orthodoxy and personal prejudices against Akbar cannot be supported on any valid ground. The trend, in fact, shows an emotional attachment to Akbar and a conscious effort to gloss over the faults and errors committed by him. It bespeaks of a negative attitude born of a particular way of thinking and the system of education as well as circumstances which have helped to advance motivated historiography of the present times. Anybody who goes through the *Muntakhabut Tawārikh* with an unbiased mind cannot but acknowledge the sincerity, truthfulness and courage of its author.

The merit of 'Abdul Qādir Badāūni lies in the fact that when every other writer was no more than a panegyric of the Emperor, Badāūni stood apart from all of them. According to Elliot, "rarely do the other obsequious annalists dare to utter their own sentiments, especially such as would be ungrateful to a royal ear, or to confess their own errors and foibles, as 'Abdul Qādir does with so much complacency and indifference." (Vol. V., p. 480)

rising of this star of prosperity (i.e. birth of Prince Salīm) and went on foot from Agra to Ajmīr, travelling six or seven *coses* each day. After fulfilling the rites of the pilgrimage he returned, and in the blessed month of Ramazān he encamped outside Dehli, and spent some days in visiting the tombs of the saints of God."[1]

"The Emperor had Mirzā Maqīm of Isfahān together with a certain person named Mīr Yāqūb of Kashmir put to death on the charge of being *Shi'ahs*."[2]

"The Emperor . . . with a view to visiting the tomb of that Pole-star of Shaikhs . . . honoured Shaikh Farīd . . . went towards Ajodhan, which is generally known as Pattan."[3]

"In the beginning of Sh'abān the Emperor left Dehlī for Ajmīr . . . At the beginning of the blessed month of Ramazān he arrived within seven *coses* of Ajmīr, and dismounting in his accustomed manner made a pilgrimage to the shrine, and presented a pair of kettle drums of Dāūd's, . . . And daily, according to his custom, held in that sacred shrine by night intercourse with holy, learned, and sincere men, and *seances* for dancing and sufiism took place."[4]

"In the year nine hundred and eighty the buildings of the *'Ibādat-Khānah* were completed...His Majesty spent whole nights in praising God; he continually occupied himself in pronouncing *Yā huw*[5] and *Yā hādī*[6], in which he was well versed."[7]

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1. *Muntakhabut Tāwrīkh*, Vol. II, p. 127-28; also *see Akbar Nāmah*, Vol. III, p. 233
2. *Muntakhabut Tawārīkh*, Vol. II, p. 128
3. *Muntakhabut Tawārīkh*, Vol II, p. 137; also *see Tabaqāt-i-Akbari*, Vol. II, p. 362
4. *Muntakhabut Tawārīkh*, Vol. II, p. 188; also see *Akbar Nāmah*, Vol. III, p. 259
5. Meaning; 'O He (God)!
6. Meaning 'O Guide!
7. *Muntakhabut Tawārīkh*, Vol. II, page 203; *Akbar Nāmah*, V p. 364; *Tabaqāt Akbari*, Vol. III, p. 514

"On Fridays after prayers he would go from the new chapel of the Shaikh-ul-Islām, and hold meeting in this building. Shaikhs, 'Ulamā, and pious men, and a few of his own companions and attendants were the only people who were invited......His Majesty would go from time to time to these various parties, and converse with them, and discuss philosophical subjects."[1]

In the events of the year 986/1578 we read about Akbar's preoccupations at Fatehpur Sikri:

"There he used to spend much time in the *'Ibādat-Khānah* in the company of learned men and Shaikhs. And especially on Friday nights, when he would sit up there the whole night continually occupied in discussing questions of religion, whether fundamental or collateral."[2]

"At the same time His Majesty ordered Qāzi Jalāl-ud-dīn, and several 'Ulamā, to read out the commentary on the Qur'ān."[3]

In the annals of 985/1577, it is stated:

"After performing the pilgrimages at Dehli to the tombs of the great saints of that illustrious locality, the Emperor went on a hunting expedition in the neighbourhood of Pālam[4]"

Once when Akbar was walking and came near the Madrasah Khair-ul-Manāzil established by Mahum Ankah, a slave name Faulād, whom Mirzā Sharaf-ud-dīn Husain had set free, shot an arrow at him which happily did no more than graze his skin. The providential escape was taken by Akbar as a "supernatural admonition and the miracles of the Pirs of Dehlī."[5]

Another time while returning after a visit to the mausoleum of Khwāja Muin-ud-dīn Chishtī at Ajmer, Akbar visited Shaikh

1. *Muntakhabut Tawārikh*, Vol II, pp. 204-205; *Tabaqāt-i-Akbari*, Vol. II, p. 471
2. *Muntakhabut Tawārikh*, Vol. II, p. 262
3. *Ibid*, p. 215
4. *Muntakhabut Tawārikh*, Vol. II, p. 259: *Tabaqāt-i-Akbari*, Vol. II, p. 507
5. *Muntakhabut Tawārikh*, Vol. II, p. 60

Nizām Nārnaulī (who was one of the greatest Shaikhs), and "in the fulness of his faith entreated his prayers."[1]

Akbar had a great regard for Shaikh Salīm Chishtī whose monastery was built by him on the top of the hill at Sīkrī. The Shaikh had promised Akbar that his prayers for the blessing of a son would be answered. Accordingly, when Akbar learnt that his Hindu consort, the daughter of Rājā Bihārī Mal of Ambar, was with child she was sent to the Shaikh's monastery at Sīkrī, where was born the prince who received the name Salīm in the honour of the Saint.[2]

Another son of Akbar, prince Murād, was also born in the monastery of Shaikh Salīm Chishtī.[3]

On the request of Akbar, "prince Salim received the tablet of instruction from the hand of the God-fearing Maulānā Mīr Kalān, the traditionist of Herāt...and learnt the lesson 'In the name of the Gracious and Merciful God."[4]

"The Emperor on account of his great reverence for the Shaikh ('Abd-un-Nabī) used to go from time to time to his house to hear lectures on the Traditions of the Prophet, and once or twice he even stood before him without his shoes and made the eldest Prince attend his school to learn the (collection of) 40 *ahādīth* by the renowned master Maulānā 'Abdur Rahmān Jāmī."[5]

Mullā 'Abdul Qādīr relates his own experience: "Then the Emperor gave me a pair of splendid Nakhūdī shawls (and said): 'Take these and go and see the Shaikh ('Abd-un-Nabī), and say to him from us: 'They are from our own private treasury, and we had them made on purpose for you, do you wear them."[6]

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1. *Muntakhabut Tawārikh*, Vol. II, p. 108; *Tabaqāt-i-Akbari*, Vol. II, p. 350
2. *Muntakhabut-Tawārikh*, Vol. II, pp, 112, 124; *Tabaqāt-i-Akbari* vol. II, p. 356-7.
3. *Muntakhabut-Tawarikh*, Vol. II, pp. 135-6; *Tabaqāt-i-Akbari* p. 360
4. *Muntakhabut-Tawārikh*, Vol. II p. 173
5. *Ibid*, p. 206-7
6. *Ibid*, p. 243-4

Shaikh Muhammad Ghauth of Gwālior was one of the renowned mystics of Shattārī order. He was granted a *jāgīr* which yielded an annual income of a million sterling.[1] Akbar sent for his son, Shaikh Ziā Ullah and assembled a party in his honour at the *'Ibādat-Khānah*, every Thursday evening in which he invited Sayyids, Shaikhs, 'Ulamā and Amīrs.[2]

The homage rendered by Akbar to the pious and heavenly-minded persons was after the custom of his Timurid forefathers who were all devoted to Khwājā Nasīr-ud-dīn 'Ubaid Ullah Ahrār. Sultān Abū Sa'eed, the grandfather of Bābur used to go bare footed for paying his respect to the Khawājā and never did anything without consulting him. Bābur's father 'Umar Shaikh Mirzā also held the Khwājā in reverence. Bābur has paid glowing tributes to him in his Memoirs. Several women of the royal family were given in marriage to the mystic Shaikhs of Naqshbandiyah order. When Khwājā Yahyā, who was one of the descendants of Khwājā 'Ubaid Ullah Ahrār came to India, Akbar received him with the greatest honour and bestowed a *jāgīr* for his maintenance. "He was made 'leader of the pilgrimage' and was sent on his way to the holy places with ample stores for the journey. When he had attained the felicity of completing the pilgrimage he returned, and passed his precious time in Agra."[3]

Akbar had appointed seven persons to lead the congregational prayers, one for the five prayers of each day of the week[4].

Akbar used to send at his cost a large number of persons for performing pilgrimage every year. Sometimes a general order was issued that any one who wished might go at his expense.[5] Narrating an event of the kind, Bādaunī says, "Sultān

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1. *Munakhabut Tawārikh*, Vol. III, p. 29
2. *Muntakhabut Tawārikh*, Vol. II, p. 204; *Tabaqāt-i-Akbari*, Vol. II, p. 235,
3. *Muntakhabut-Tawarikh*, Vol. III, p. 151; *Akbar Nāmah*, Vol. III, p. 382-3.
4. *Muntakhabut Tawārikh*, Vol. II, p.232
5. *Muntakhabut Tawārikh*, Vol. II, p. 258; *Tabaqat-i-Akbari*, Vol. II, p. 517.

Khwājah son of Khwājah Khāwand Mahmūd, he appointed *Mīr Hājī*[1], and sent a sum of six lacs of rupees, in money and goods, to be distributed among the deserving people of Makkah and Madīnah, and for building a *Khānkāh*[2] in the sacred precincts. When the Emperor dismissed Sultān Khwājah on his road to the two sacred cities, he himself, with bare head and feet, and dressed in the *Ihrām*,[3] and in every respect clothed like a pilgrim and having shorn his head a little, went a little distance in his train. At this a cry broke forth from the multitude, and he showed himself moved by their devotion".[4]

When Shāh Abū Turāb, sent by Akbar as a leader of the pilgrims, returned from Hijāz with a stone with the impression of the foot of the Prophet on it, "the Emperor went a distance of four *coses* to meet it, and commanded the Amirs to carry it by turns a few step, and in this manner they brought it to the city".[5]

The accounts of early religiosity of Akbar find confirmation in the statement of another renowned historian of the Moghul period, Mir 'Abdur Razzāq Khafi Khān, also known as Ṣamṣam-ud-daulah Shahnawāz Khan (1111-1171 A.H.)[6] which would be a fitting epilouge to this description. Khafi Khān writes in the *Ma'athir-ul-Umarā*'.

> "Emperor Akbar used to exert himself in promulgating the injunctions of the *shari'ah*, enforcing the acts commendable and preventing those impermissible. Often he gave the call to prayers and led the congregation and even swept the mosque for merit's sake."[7]

1. Leader of pilgrims.
2. A rest house
3. Dress worn by the pilgrims
4 *Muntakhabat Tawārikh*, Vol. II, p.246
5. *Muntakhabut Tawārikh*, Vol. II, p. 320; *Tabaqāt-i-Akbari*, Vol. II, p. 558
6. A.D. 1699-1758
7. *Ma'āthir-ul-Umarā*,' Vol. II, p. 651

The Second Phase of Akbar's Rule

Akbar's pietism[1] illustrated by the instances cited here breathes of a devoutness of the common herd, grounded not in the study of the Qur'ān and the *sunnah*, nor in its deep knowledge acquired through keeping company of the scholars and righteous persons, but shows the overreligiousness of a rustic soldier to which any illiterate person living in the ninth century Central Asia would have become accustomed by force of circumstances and his contact with ignorant nobles and war-lords of the period. It was indeed a credulous faith bordering on superstitious trust in the saints and the merit in paying visits to their shrines; sometimes covering long distances on foot, and rendering reverential honour to the descendants of the saints or keepers of their shrines who seldom possessed any learning or spirituality like their illustrious ancestors. His religiosity was displayed through sweeping the monasteries, taking part in the musical recitations of devotional poetry and paying homage to the worldly-minded mystics and scholars who had attached themselves to his court. 'It is a common knowledge that Akbar was illiterate.[2]

1 In the account of Akbar's death, given by Jahāngīr in the *Tūzuk Jahāngīri* (the first part was written by Jahāngīr himself) it is stated that in his last moments Akbar had realised his mistake and died after reciting the *Kalematus Shahādat* or the words of testimony. *Sūrah Yāsīn* of the Qur'ān was being recited at the time by his bedside. We are, however, not concerned how he made his last journey and in what state he met the Lord for our study relates to his efforts in promulgating his new faith and the effects it had on Islam and the Muslims.

2. When according to custom the age of Akbar had reached four years, four months and four days he was given in the tutorship of Mullāzādah 'Esām-ud-dīn Ibrāhīm but the Mullāzādah did not take long to realise that the Prince had no inclination towards his studies. However, it was taken as lack of attention and interest on the part of the Mullāzādah and another tutor, Maulānā Bā Yazīd, was appoin-

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The Timurids were generally extremists and overreligious, volatile, thoughtless and unsteady. Akbar's father Humāyūn is stated to be a gallant and great fighter who seemed to be a man made of steel in the battlefield, but after a moment of success he would busy himslef in merry-making and dream among the precious hours in the opium eaters' paradise. Jahāngīr, too, had the same weakness of disproportion and contradiction in his character.

We should also not forget the extraordinary conditions in which Akbar had spent his childhood. The treachery of his uncles, defeats suffered by his father and the bitter experiences during his journey to Irān and, finally, the behaviour of his benefactor Bairam Khān had given him a sceptical frame of mind questioning the sincerity of his well-wishers and the soundness of every truth and fact.

Effect of Religious Discussions

Had Akbar been aware of his limitations as an illiterate person and realised that all his interests and ambitions lay in the affairs of the world: in being a better administrator and in consolidation of his empire; he would have not only overcome his weaknesses, just mentioned, but also saved his soul and acted like many other Muslim kings and emperors, as some had been in his own family, and proved himself an exalted Protector of the Faith. But the self-realisation of his weakness was not the virtue to be found in Akbar just as the drawback of illiteracy was not the failing of any other Timurid prince from Bābur to Bahādur Shāh. Akbar was great as a general and unsurpassed

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(Concluded)

ted in his place but the Prince still showed no inclination to take his studies seriously. The subsequent unsettled political conditions and Humāyūn's wanderings did not allow Akbar to receive any education and thus he remained unacquainted with the arts of reading and writing (Elliot, Vol. V, p. 223).

as an administrator. He should not have delved into religious affairs and should have better left these matters, like a good Muslim and a good soldier to the doctors of religion and those competent to handle them as was done by Bābur and Humāyūn (although both were well-versed in literature and had a refind taste). He ought to have kept himself aloof from the delicate doctrinal matters of faith and metaphysical issues, scholastic intricacies and the tangled question of comparative religions. This was the domain where the slightest mistake or inexperience can cause one to go on a wrong track leading to eternal ignominy. He intruded in a field of which he had the least knowledge, and, what is more, his action ran counter to the political interests of a dynasty that was to hold the charge of an important part of the Muslim world for four hundred years. Mistake of a similar nature, of meddling with doctrinal and scholastical issues and employing the State's power and influence in his favour, was committed earlier by a much more learned and intelligent king like Caliph Māmūn al-Rashīd (170-218 AH)[1] but that had neither proved profitable to him nor to any body else.[2]

But Akbar was ambitious and imaginative, and had an inquisitive disposition. His uninterrupted victories in the battlefields and series of successful diplomatic manoeuvres had led him to labour under the misconception that he could solve the mysteries of mute reality, faith and creed in the same manner as he dealt with the administrative and political problems.

And, to make the matter still worse, there were crafty self-sellers of his court who arranged the wranglings and verbal contests to take the place of customary cock and bull fights, the normal amusement of eastern rulers and potentates, partly for showing off their intellectual grit and partly for the recreation of their master who seemed to enjoy these passage of words. These contests held in the 'Hall of Worship' were miscalled religious

1. A.D. 787-833
2. For details see *Saviours of Islamic Spirit*, Part I, pp.78-86

discussions and enquiries in different faiths. It is a brutal fact, perhaps experienced times without number in the history of religions, that unless one attending such polemical disputations is endowed with a keen intellect and deep knowledge of the subject, and is also blessed with a divine grace, one is more likely to fall a prey to scepticism and sophism and end up as an atheist or a neo-Platonist.

Jahāngīr's evidence about Akbar shows that he had fallen into a state of religious mania. He writes in his *Tūzuk*:

> "My father always associated with the learned of every creed and religion, especially Pandits and the learned of India, and although he was illiterate, so much became clear to him through constant intercourse with the learned and wise, in his conversation with them, that no one knew him to be illiterate, and he was so acquainted with the niceties of verse and prose compositions that his deficiencey was not thought of".[1]

Akbar was not content to limit his quest to Islam and Hinduism and other religions of India; he invited even European scholars to get himself acquainted with Christianity. Abul Fazl acknowledges that arrangements were made to translate the Pentateuch, the Gospels and the Psalms and to convey these to the Emperor. An embassy was sent in the person of Saiyid Muzaffar to certain Christian kings to whom a letter was sent, saying:

> "In our spare time we meet the scholars of all the religions and derive benefit from their sublime thoughts and useful conversation. Differences of tongue stand in our way, so kindly send a man for our pleasure, who may be able to convey the noble concepts in an intelligible manner. It has been brought to our notice that the revealed books, such as the Pentateuch, the Gospels and the Psalms, have been translated into Arabic and Persian. Should these books,

1. *Tūzuk Jahāngīri*, p. 33

which are profitable to all, whether translated or not, be procurable in your country, send them. We are deputing honourable Saiyid Muzaffar, a recipient of our favours, for obtaining a few copies of these translations in order to strengthen our friendship and the bases of unity. He will have conversation with you and correspond with you".[1]

Translations of Christian scriptures were produced before the Emperor and a few missionaries also called upon him personally to explain the doctrines of the Trinity and the truth of Christinity. Badāūnī writes describing the mission of these Church Fathers:

"Learned monks also from Europe, who are called *pādre*, and have an infallible head, called Pāpā (Pope)... brought the Gospel, and advanced proofs for the Trinity."[2]

Akbar had been so crazy about it that in a letter to the fathers of the Christian Society at Goa he wrote:

"Your reverences will be able immediately, on receiving my letter to send some of them to my Court with all confidence, so that in disputations with my doctors I may compare their several learning and character, and see the superiority of the Fathers over my doctors, whom we call Qāzī, and whom by this means they can teach the truth."[3]

Victory in polemical disputations does not depend, as the experience shows, either on the truth of any religion or even the cogent arguments and intrinsic evidences, but on the gift of the gab possessed by a contender. It is not unoften that propounders of a weak doctrine wins the sympathies of the audience by his eloquence and playing upon the sentiments of the listeners. On the other hand, the advocate of a religion far more virtuous and truthful is likely to lose the war of words if he lacks these qualities. It is also doubtful if the scholars representing Islam in the court of Akbar had adequate knowledge of Christianity and

1. *Inshā'-i-Abul Fazl*, p. 39
2. *Muntakabut Tawārikh*, Vol. II, p. 267
3. Cited from Dr. Ishwari Prassad, *The Mughal Empire*, p. 375

its weaknesses or were even qualified to defend Islam as a rational and practical religion against the onslaughts of Christian missionaries. In fact, Christianity was in those days a new religion in India with a few adherents, mostly foreigners, and so the Muslim religious scholars had never taken it seriously enough to study its doctrines, while the Portuguese, who had sent the missionaries, had already set up a College of Jesuit Mission at Goa for the purpose of theological study and propagation of Christianity in India.[1] There was nothing strange, if in these circumstances, the Catholic missionaries had made a favourable impression upon Akbar who might have considered them intellectually superior to the Muslim religious scholars. Be it as it may, the outcome of these controversial wranglings was not different from what one might have expected and as confirmed by Badāūnī: "And persons of novel and whimsical opinions, in accordance with their pernicious ideas, and vain doubts, coming out of ambush decked the false in the garb of the true, and wrong in the dress of right, and cast the Emperor, who was possessed of an excellent disposition, and was an earnest searcher after truth, but very ignorant and a mere tyro, and used to the company of infidels and base persons, into perplexity, till doubt was heaped upon doubt, and he lost all definite aim, and the straight wall of the clear Law, and of firm religion was broken down, so that after five or six years not a trace of Islam was left in him; and everything was turned topsy turvy"[2]

At another place Badāūnī says: "In the same way every command and doctrine of Islam, whether special or general, as the prophetship, the harmony of Islam with reason, the doctrine of *rūyat*,[3] *taklīf*[4] and *takwīn*[5], the details of the day of resurrection

1. *Akbar Nāmah*, Vol. III, p. 1027; *Commentarius*, I, p. 34
2. *Muntakhabut-Tawārīkh*, Vol. II, pp. 262-263
3. Vision of God in the Hereafter.
4. Moral responsibility of human beings.
5. Creation of the Universe.

and judgement, all were doubted and rediculed"[1].

To cap it all, the subtle and delicate points of Quranic exegesis and history of the earliest period of Islam were brought into discussion, in the illiterate Emperor's court permeated with a playful and hilarious atmosphere. As Badāūni says, "His Majesty ordered Qāzi Jalāl-ud-dīn and several 'Ulamā to read out the commentary[2] on the Qur'ān, but this led to great dissentions among them. Deep Chand Rājah Manjholah—that fool!—once set the whole court in laughter by saying that Allah after all had great respect for cows, else the cow would not have been mentioned in the first chapter of the Qur'ān. His Majesty had also the early history of Islam read out to him, and soon began to think less of the *sahābah*[3]. Soon after, the observance of the five prayers, and the fasts, and the belief in everything connected with the Prophet, were put down to vain superstitions, and man's reason, not tradition, was acknowledged as the only basis of religion. Portuguese priests also came frequently; and His Majesty accepted[4] certain articles of their belief based upon reason"[5].

Role of Religious Scholars

The doctors of religion had a decisive role to play in helping Akbar to keep to the right path as well as to avoid the pitfalls natural to a ruler of headstrong disposition but with little sense of proportion. But the scholars needed for it had to have profound knowledge of religious wisdom and were to be possessed of sagacity and judiciousness. They had to keep their eyes more on fundamentals than on the details, on the objectives than on the means, and were to be cognizant of the need to fraternize with

1. *Muntakhabut-Tawārīkh*,, Vol. II, p. 317
2. W. H. Lowe's rendering "to write a commentary" is incorrect.
3. Companions of the Prophet.
4. Lowe's version says "enquried into", which is not correct a translation of *giraftand*.
5. *Muntakhabut-Tawārīkh*, Vol. II, p. 215

others instead of alienating them. They had also to be virtuous and selfless, pious and above worldly temptations, and to understand the fact that the kingdom, having a hold on an overwhelming non-Muslim majority, still conscious of its identity and the loss of its power, could not last without winning their cooperation. These scholars had also to understand that the great kingdom they had the opportunity to serve was the second largest power after the Ottoman Caliphate of Turkey by virtue of its resources, manpower and extensiveness of its dominions, and that the greatest need of the time, virtually an act of worship, was to guard that empire against all dangers. They had to help the ruler in his onerous task of strengthening that empire and, at the same time, making it a citadel of Islam.

The Emperor required, on the other hand, courtiers and counsellors who had a strong conviction in the faith of the founder of that empire, who, in 933/1527, had won the battle against Rānā Sāngā after making a pledge to serve the cause of God.[1] These persons, too, had not only to possess moral grit but also an awareness of the need to keep themselves aloof from all those irreligious and atheistic thoughts and movements, prevalent in the tenth century Irān and India, whose aim was to promote mental confusion and political anarchy. They had to devote themselves to the great task of providing a clean administration, integrating the society and the administrative apparatus, and to work for social and moral uplift of the people.

Had Akbar been fortunate to enlist the support of the enlightened and the sincere among these two elements of his empire, his kingdom would have undoubtedly played the same role in the service of Islam as was done by the Ottomans in the West. Iqbal had very correctly remarked that "The Timurīd Turks were not a bit inferior to the Othmānī Turks".

But it was a misfortune of Akbar that with all his glory and

1. See *Tārikh-i-Firishtā* by Muhammad Qāsim Firishtā; *Tabaqāt-i-Akbari*, Vol. II, p. 37

grandeur none of his courtiers belonging to these two groups were gifted with the instinct and genius required of them. Many of them rather performed the regrettable task of not only alienating him from religion but even helped him to join his fortunes with anti-Islamic thoughts and movements.

Religious Scholars of Akbar's Court

Let us first take the doctors of religion attached to the imperial court. Akbar paid greatest marks of respect to them during the initial period of his rule; they were first to be promoted as his counsellors. He showed absolute confidence in them but they proved to be a lot which, according to a great savant and critic Shaikh 'Abdullāh b. Mubārak, oftentimes happen to prove as one of the three important causes of promoting irreligion. He says: "Who else have mutilated religion save the kings, insincere scholars and earthly-minded pietists?"

We are again referring here to the testimony of Badāunī for he was an eye-witness to the actions of his fellow courtiers and also, because, there is no evidence to show that he bore any grudge against the religious scholars which might discredit his testimony. Depicting a picture of the Akbar's court he writes:

> "He (Akbar) assembled a party in his (Sheikh Ziā Ullah's) honour at the *Ibādat-Khānah,* and every Thursday evening he invited the Saiyids, Shaikhs, 'Ulmā and Amīrs. But ill-feeling arose in the company about the seats and order of precedence, so His Majesty ordered that the Amīrs should sit on the east side, the Saiyids on the west, the 'Ulamā on the south, and the Shaikhs on the north. His Majesty would go from time to time to these various parties, and converse with them, and discuss philosphical subjects."[1]

1. *Muntakhabut-Tawārīkh,* Vol. II, pp. 204-5

Badāunī further relates that 'all at once one night the vein of the neck of the 'Ulamā of the age swelled up, and a horrid noise and confusion ensued. His Majesty got very angry at their rude behaviour,'[1] and he took their behaviour as impertinence.

Akbar got very angry at their unmannerliness and said to Badāunī, "In future report any of the 'Ulamā who talk nonsense and cannot behave themselves, and I shall make him leave the hall."[2]

One of the learned scholars in Akbar's entourage was Mullā 'Abdullah of Sultānpūr.[3] He was supposed to be 'the infallible guide and expositor' of the faith and had been conferred the title of Makhdūm-ul-Mulk. He had given a *fatwā*[4] that the ordinance of pilgrimage to Mecca was no longer binding, perhaps, for the reason that he might not himself be called upon to perform the pilgrimage. He had also invented a device for avoiding payment of the legal alms (*zakāt*) due upon his wealth[5]. He had made such a pile of wealth during Akbar's time that several boxes filled with gold bricks were later unearthed from his ancestral cemetery where they had been buried under the pretext of dead relations.[6]

Another scholar enjoying patronage of Akbar, next only to Makhdūm-ul-Mulk, was Maulānā 'Abdun Nabī.[7] He held the

1. *Muntakhabut-Tawārikh*, Vol. II, p. 205
2. *Ibid.*, p. 205
3. A district in the Indian Punjab. For further details of Mulla 'Abdullah see *Nuzhatul Khawātir*, Vol. V.
4. Authoritative juristic opinion in accordance with the Islamic Law.
5. Towards the end of each year he used to make over all his property to his wife, but before the year had run out he took it back again. Under the Islamic law the poor-due or legal alms become due on possession of surplus stock for a whole year, so he absolved himself of this responsibility in this manner.
6. According to one report the gold bricks worth thirty million rupees were unearthed from the cemetery.
7. Shaikh 'Abdun Nabi was son of Shaikh Ahmad Gangoh and grandson

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office of Sadr-us-Sadūr, the Chief Justice of the kingdom and was believed to be one of the ablest religious doctors of his time and an authority on the Traditions. The reports about him in the *Muntakhabut-Tawārīkh*, however, show that he was just a half-learned person who could not even pronounce Arabic words correctly.[1] On occasions Akbar even stood before him without his shoes and the nobles and scholars had to wait for hours in order to pay a visit to him. He was given the charge of disbursement of large sums of money and tax-free lands for religious and charitable purposes. According to one report he surpassed his predecessors in magnanimity and open-handed charity. But the historian Badāūnī, a colleague and friend of 'Abdun Nabī, reports that he was rapacious and unworthy, lacked good manners of the 'Ulamā and of his own illustrious forefathers and was sometimes even rude and scant of courtesy. May be that he became arrogant and inconsiderate because of his office and authority but it is true that he did not leave a good impression of his behaviour either on the Emperor or on other nobles of the court. 'Abdul Qādir Badāūnī accuses him of misusing his authority. He writes: "For this reason a large number of worthy people from the extreme east of India and as far west as Bakkar (on the Indus) came to Court. If any of them had a powerful protector in one of the Amīrs, or near friends of His Majesty, he could manage to get his affairs settled; but such as were destitute of such recommendations had to bribe Sayyid 'Abd-ur-Rasūl, the Shaikh's head-man, or make presents to

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of Shāh 'Abdul Qaddūs (d. 1537 A.D.). Having received education from certain scholars of Arabia, he had differences with his father who believed in the Unity of Being and the legality of musical recitations. Further details about him can be seen in the *Nuzhatul Khawātir*, Vol. V.

1. It is difficult to believe Badāūnī's report that he misspelt even common words of Arabic for he had received education from Shahāb-ud-dīn Ahmad b. Hajr Haytamī of Mecca who was a great scholar and author.

his chamberlains, door-keepers and sweepers, in order to get their blanket out of the mire."[1]

Shaikh 'Abdun Nabī's orthodoxy was beyond question. Sometimes he was so impolite as to cast to winds the adroitness required in dealing with the persons and circumstances. "Once, on the occasion of Akbar's birthday the nobles and grandees were paying their respect to the Emperor," writes the auther of the *Ma'āthir-ul-Umrā*, who had put on a saffron-coloured garment. The Shaikh raised objection to the colour of Emperor's dress and bade him to take it off, but he did it in such a way that the staff in his hand touched the head of the Emperor. This gave great offence to Akbar, but he kept quiet and complained to his mother about the behaviour of the Shaikh. His mother, belonging to a saintly family, mellowed his anger by saying that the incident would get a place in history which would record that a doctor of religion who was a subject to the Emperor hit him with his staff but the Emperor kept quiet for his deference to the *shari'ah*."[2]

The two principal leaders of the 'Ulamā, Makhdūm-ul-Mulk and Shaikh 'Abdun Nabī, quarrelled among themselves and became contenders of one another. 'Abdun Nabī decried Makhdūm-ul-Mulk and Makhdūm-ul-mulk denounced 'Abdun Nabī as an apostate while their followers arrayed themselves behind their leaders as two different camps at loggerheads. If the historians have made a correct assessment of the character of these two persons, there hardly remains any doubt that none of the two was possessed of the learning and piety or even graciousness required of a doctor of religion to represent his faith during a period so crucial as the reign of Akbar. If advisors with the talents, learning and piety of Rajā' b. Haiwah[3] and Qāzi Abū

1. *Muntakhabut-Tawārikh*, Vol. II, pp. 207-8
2. *Ma'āthir ul-Umrā*, Vol. II, p. 561
3. A Minister of Caliph Sulaimān b. 'Abdul Malik

Yūsuf[1] were not to be had at the time, Akbar deserved counsellors of at least 'Abdul 'Azīz Āsif Khān and Qāzī Shaikh-ul-Islām's calibre. Akbar had drawn to his court some of the most intelligent scholars of seculars sciences, adept in literature and penmanship. Religious scholars gifted with greater talents and intelligence were required to outshine these men of letters.

Akbar, according to 'Abdul Qādir Badāūnī, rated Makhdūm-ul-Mulk and 'Abdun Nabī and some other scholars of his time, as unmatched even by Rāzī and Ghazzālī but when he witnessed their stinginess and unbecoming conduct he discarded the 'Ulamā altogether.

Courtiers and Counsellors

Akbar was as much unfortunate in having self-seeking advisors and councellors as he was in the case of religious scholars. Being an unlettered man, every fluent chatterer, especially if he happened to come from Irān, then looked upon as the Greece of the East by every Indian and Afghān, could put him in a trance. At the time when he was losing his faith in Islam, there came to his court from Irān the three brothers, Hakīm Abul Fath Gilānī, Humāyūn[2] and Hakīm Nūr-ud-dīn Qarārī, and all the three were conferred rank and dignity. Shortly thereafter Mullā Yazdī arrived in India with a vituperative tongue against the Prophet's companions. Hakīm Abul Fath went a step further and publicly denied the truth of religion and everything taught by it like revelation, prophethood and miracles.[3] This was the time when Sharīf Āmlī, who had fled from Irān, arrived at the court of Akbar. As stated earlier, he was an agnostic follower of Mahmūd of Basākhwān.

During the same period of disbelief and scepticism another man Gadāī Brahmadās by name, who belonged to Kālpi and was

1. Chief Justice and religious advisor of Caliph Hārūn al-Rashid
2. Also known as Hakīm Humām.
3. *Muntakhabut-Tawārikh*. Vol. II, p. 214

an affable, witty flatterer found favour with the Emperor. Very soon he rose in the good graces of Akbar and was awarded the proud title of Rājā Bīrbar.[1] Being an intelligent man with intuitive perception of what was the right thing to do in the circumstances he was placed, he took to ridiculing Islamic faith and practices. His wit was rewarded with clapping and applause by all in Akbar's court. Thus, he had also a hand in making Akbar disrespectful of Islam.[2]

Mullā Mubārak and his Sons

Mullā Mubārak of Nāgore also got an access[3] to the Imperial court which brought the intellectual fluster of the Akbar's court to a head. Two of his sons, Faizī and Abul Fazl crept day by day more into favour of the Emperor, until they attained the highest rank, and were honoured with the distinction of becoming the Emperor's closest confidants. A dispassionate study of the character and doings of Mullā Mubārak, Abul Fazl and Faizī would show that all of the three were the best brains of the age and giants of learning, specially in the secular sciences of the time. All the three were well-versed in Persian literature and writers with a facile pen. In short, they were the best products of the system of education then in vogue who could be taken as the most profound men of that generation. Had these brilliant men with sharpness of intellect and depth of knowledge been also gifted with sincerity, purity of spirit, a strong conviction and a desire to follow the divine commands, they would have served a large segment of humanity, perhaps, in a manner unparalleled in history, by saving it from disintegrating forces of the time. Yet, the record of events preserved by historians and

1. *Darbār-i-Akbarī* by Muhammad Husain Azad portrays the character and demeanour of Rājā Bīrbar. *See* pp. 336-383
2. *Muntakhabut-Tawārīkh*, Vol. II, p. 164
3. In the *Akbar Nāmah*, Abul Fazl describes the first meeting by his father with the Emperor in the twelfth year of Akbar's reign.

the writings of Abul Fazl and Faizī lead us to the conclusion that:

(1) Mullā Mubārak was impatient and rebellious by nature. His studies of the four juristic schools of Sunnism and their mutual differences did not lead him to find the common chord running through them or to syncretise them through deductive reasoning and interpretation. Instead, he got dissatisfied from all and developed a tendency to reject and refute the whole of juristic thought and researches made by the great scholars. Thereafter he got in touch with the well known scholastic of Shīrāz, Abul Fazl Gāzrūnī, who whetted his craze for theosophy. He did not, however, turn to any spiritual guide who could have helped him to attain higher stages in his spiritual journey as well as warned him against the satanic suggestions and self-deceiving snares of the way: he decided to go it alone by undertaking study of books on mysticism and neo-Platonism and to practice austerities by himself with the result that he developed an still greater mental unrest and volatile temperament. His roving pursuits ultimately convinced him that the easiest course in everything was to swim with the stream. Khawājā Kalān, the son of an eminent mystic of the time, Khwāja Bāqī Billāh, who had been brought up by Shaikh Mubārak's daughter[1], writes about him that "he managed to get along with every manner and complexion popular with the nobles and grandees of the time".[2] Sir Wolsely Haig is of the opinion that "Shaikh Mubārak, the father of Faizī and Abul Fazl, had revelled in spiritual experience. He had been in turn a Sunnī, a Shiah, a Sūfī, a Mahdīst, and probably many other things besides."[3]

(2) Besides being amibtious, Mullā Mubārak wanted to be

1. Khwājā Kalān was brought up by Shaikh Mubarak's second daughter who was married to Khwājā Hosām-ud-dīn. (*Tārikh Hindustān*, Vol. V, p. 947
2. *Mubligh-ur-Rijāl*, p. 33A
3. *Cambridge History of India*, Vol. IV, p. 114

comfortably situated in life. It was against his grain to continue living simply as a bookworm for he wanted to parade his knowledge in the Akbar's court and also to be rewarded for it. He strived to gain an entry in the Imperial court, and although he could not himself get a rise, he succeeded in making his sons close confidants of Akbar. His subsequent behaviour at the court has led Wolseley Haig to conclude that Shaikh Mubārak "had at first no system to offer as a substitute for orthodox Islam, and his object was purely destructive, the complete discomfiture of his enemies."[1]

(3) The religious scholars led by Makhdūm-ul-Mulk and Shaikh 'Abdun Nadī failed to recognise his talents and learning which fitted him for a higher position. He was rather opposed as a heretodox and free-thinker either because of his errant beliefs or vacillating stands, but this gave rise to a feeling of deep resentment in him against the religion itself. Muhammad Husain Āzād, the noted Urdu man of letters and historian of Akbar's reign expresses the view in his grand and forceful style that "hunted down for years by Makhdūm, Sadr and others, the hearts of the Shaikh (Abul Fazl) and his father had been cut up, which were not to be healed with the passage of time."[2] At another place offering an apology for Abul Fazl and Faizī, Azād says that "the harassments undergone by Shaikh Mubārak at the hands of Makhdūm were never forgotten by his sons. Lest these were repeated again, they started sowing seeds of doubt in the mind of Akbar, until Akbar's ideas about Islam were completely changed."[3] Muhammad Husain Āzād was himself liberal-minded, but he had to acknowledge that the "religion of Abul Fazl and Faizi remains undecided like that of their father."

(4) Antagonism of the doctors of religion to Shaikh Mubārak and his own failure to make the mark had given birth

1. *Cambridge History of India,* Vol. V, p. 114
2. *Darbār-i-Akbari,* pp. 49-50
3. *Ibid.,* p. 389

to an inferiority complex from which his whole household suffered and laboured hard to redress the wrong by parading its superiority over others. They did their best to demonstrate the invincibility of their own intellect and knowledge, and, unfortunately, Islam and its way of life became the target of their attack. A time came when the two brothers enjoyed unbounded confidence of the Emperor, to the exclusion of all other persons; they threw every other person into shadow; but then Islam was in flames, and Abul Fazl often used to recite the verses:[1]

I have set fire to my barn with my own hands,
As I am the incendiary, how can I complain of my enemy!
No one is my enemy but myself,
Woe is me! I have torn my garment with my own hands.

Of the two sons of Mulla Mubārak, both talented and learned, the elder was Abul Faiz Faizī (born 954/1547) and the younger was Abul Fazl (b. 958/1551)

Faizi was a litterateur by his own right. There can be no two opinions about his being a great scholar and a great poet. Shiblī writes in the *Sha'ir-ul-'Ajam* that Persian poetry in India had given birth to two poets only, during the long stretch of six hundred years, whose greatness has been acknowledged even by the Persians: one of these was Khusru and the other was Faizī. He took Khwājā Husain of Marv as his teacher and attained mastery in every branch of study. First introduced to Akbar in 974/1566, he immediately won the admiration of the Emperor. In a short time he became Akbar's constant companion and friend. He was not given any particular assignment at the court and engaged himself as a physician, a writer and a poet; Prince Dāniāl was placed under his charge in the twelfth year of Akbar's reign, and in a few years his royal disciple attained proficiency in all the arts and sciences. This was also the year in which Akbar recited the Friday sermon in readiness to assume temporal as well

1. *Muntakhabut-Tawārīkh*, Vol. II, p. 202

as spiritual authority over his subjects. This sermon was written by Faizī. Thereafter the office of Sadr-us-Sudūr was decentralised by appointing provincial Sadars in order to curtail the powers of Shaikh ʻAbdun Nabī. Faizī was appointed Sadr for the provinces of Āgrā, Kālinjar and Kalpī in 990/1582, and then sent at the head of an army, in 993/1586, to suppress the uprising of Yūsufza'ī Pathāns. In the thirty-third year of Akbar's rule, Faizī was honoured with title of "Prince of Poets". He was accredited to the rulers of Khāndesh as the envoy of the Emperor in 996/1589, and there he acquitted himself of the task with commendable success. Faizī died in 1004/1596.

Faizī composed many works of prose and poetry and did some translations from Sanskrit besides the famous *Sawāt'ī-ul-Ilhām*[1], which is a commentary on the Qur'ān employing only undotted letters. Faizī took two years to write this work, which was completed in 1002/1594, and showed his command over Arabic philology and grammer. He was proud of his achievement for which Akbar rewarded him ten thousand rupees.[2] Badāūnī was at variance with the religious views of Faizī but he frankly

1. Faizī had taken pains to use only undotted letters. The commentary, which was treated as a marvel, was written to refute the charge that he had little knowledge of religious sciences. But whatever command its author possessed over Arabic language this work shows that it contains hardly anything of importance, and throws little light upon the wisdom contained in the Scripture, nor has it any literary or practical value. It can better be compared with micrography of certain calligraphers who write a whole verse of the Qur'ān on a grain of rice. Another work completed during the same period by a Syrian scholar Muhammad Badr-ud-dīn alias Ibn al-Ghazzī al-Damishqī (d. 984/1550), was perhaps much more valuable. He had composed a poetical commentary of the Qur'ān consisting of 180 thousand verses along with a summary. The commentary was found to be strictly in accordance with the orthodox view. (*Al-Kawākib us-Sāirah* by Najm-ud-dīn al-Ghazzī; Muhammad b. Muhammad al-Ghizzi, Vol. II, p. 252 and *Al-Badr-ut tal'e*, V. 2, p. 252)
2. *Ma'āthir ul-Umarā*, Vol. II, p. 587

admits his learning:

> "In many separate branches of knowledge, such as poetry, the composition of enigmas, prosody, rhyme, history, philology, medicine, and prose composition Shaikh Faizī had no equal in his time."[1]

Being a great lover of books, Faizī had collected 4,600 books in his private library. Many of these are reported to have been written by Faizī himself.

Badāūnī and many other scholars of the time who were devoted to their religion were deeply perturbed at the policy pursued by Akbar. They were all of one mind that Faizī was, like his father, a heterodox, and that he was responsible for making Akbar irreligious and heretical. Faizī's character as depicted by Badāūnī is clear enough: after making allowance for Badāūnī's rhetorical flourishes, the picture of Faizī that emerges from his writings is that of a free thinker little influenced by scruples. Shiblī has tried to defend Faizī in the *Sha'ir-ul-'Ājam* but even he could not help acknowledging the fact that Faizī was a liberal who held the view that the Islam as conceived by the bigoted Mullās did not depict it correctly. Faizī treated the disputes between Shiā's and Sunnīs as unrelated to Islam and mocked at them. Giving a few examples, from Faizī's writings, to show how Faizī ridiculed these matters, Shiblī goes on to say that Faizī and Abul Fazl contrived to have the religious discussions which made it apparant to all the courtiers that the only expedient that the bigots resorted to was to denounce others as apostates.[2]

It seems that Faizī was known, during his life-time, to have entertained irreligious and atheistic ideas. Faizī met a tragic end which gave occasion to several chronograms for calculating the year of his death.[3]

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1. *Muntakhabut-Tawārīkh*, Vol. III, pp. 299
2. *'Sha'ir-ul-'Ajam*, Vol. III, pp. 49-50
3. *Muntakhabut-Tawārīkh*, Vol. II, p. 420 and *Darbār-i Akbari*, p. 471

Abul Fazl was also a versatile genius, far above others in dexterity with an uncommon intelligence. His compositions, in prose, stand unique and inimitable like the verses of his elder brother. As he writes in the *Akbar Nāmah* he became 'egotistic and self-conceited' in the beginning and 'the foot of his energy rested for a while in admiration of his own excellence' but this later on 'put into his head the thought of asceticism and retirement'.[1] Ultimately he became a believer in the rational way and disdainful of orthodoxy.[2]

Abul Fazl was presented at Akbar's Court in 981/1573, when he wrote a commentary on the Quranic verse known as *Āyatal-Kursi*. A year later, he produced a commentary of the *Sūrat-ul-Fath* and presented it to the Emperor after which he grew in favour and power, until he rose to the office of the Prime Minister. The greatest of his literary productions was *Āin-i-Akbarī* which is a valuable and minute statistical account of the military, industrial, agricultural, economic, social, cultural, intellectual and religious life of India during the Mughal rule. His another work of great merit, the *Akbar Nāmah*[3] is a record of day to day events of the time. He has to his credit a collection or letters called *Inshā'i-Abul Fazl* and a few other works of repute. He was murdered by Bīr Singh Deo Bundela at the instance of Jahangir in 1011/1602. Akbar wept bitterly on learning the death of his friend and was for a time beside himself with grief and rage.

In an estimate of Abul Fazl, Dr. Muhammad Bāqar writes, "Abul Fazl weilded considerable influence over Akbar's religious leanings. When Akbar built his '*Ibādat-Khāna* or "Hall of Worship", in 982/1574, which was a hall of debate on religious

1. *Akbar Nāmah*, Vol. III, p. 117
2. *Bazm-i-Taimūriyāh*, p. 163.
3. Carra De Vaux writes in the *Les Penseurs Des-l'Islam* that the *Akbar Nāmah* is a literary document on which the East can justly take pride, for the intelligence of those introduced through the book were definitely ahead of their times in the art of governance and administration.

matters, Abul Fazl made it a point to attend the discussions and to support Akbar's views, until he led Akbar to believe that his views were far superior to those of the contemporary doctors of religion. In 987/1579, an Infallibility Decree was promulgated which made Akbar the judicator in disputes between the religious scholars. It was in the midst of these disputations in the Hall of Worship that Akbar thought of proclaiming a new religion and he did formally declare the advent of Dīn-i-Ilāhī in 991/1583. Abul Fazl also joined his faith to the new religion."[1] Abul Fazl's adoption of the Akbar's creed, no doubt, confirms his apostasy from Islam, but Jahāngīr accuses him of misguiding his father while secretly retaining his convictions as a Muslim.[2] A great controversy rages round Abul Fazl's faith and the reason for his abjuring Islam but if the story told by Badāūnī is correct, it might have been simply to gain his private ends. Once Hakīm-ul-Mulk and some other scholars sent privately a message to Abul Fazl by Āsaf Khān Bakhshī, "Why are you always falling foul of us ?" Abul Fazl sent back the answer, "The fact of the matter is I am the servant of a mere mortal, and not of an egg-plant."[3]

Views, however, differ on the question whether Abul Fazl was a man of liberal outlook free from religious bigotry or he was a perverter of truth and a deceiver of the faithful. He has generally been regarded as a broad-minded narrator of facts who often indulged in fulsome flattery of his master, but was absolutely free from the prejudices of the petty minds. However, an incident narrated differently by him and Badāūnī might help us to analyse the objects and designs Abul Fazl had taken into his head.

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1. (Urdu) *Dā'irat Ma'ārif Islāmiyah*, Vol. I, pp. 889-90
2. Major Price's translation of the *Tūzuk Jahāngīrī* contains the story how Prince Salīm found forty scribes copying commentaries of the Qur'ān at Abul Fazl's house.
3. *Muntakhabut-Tawārīkh*, Vol. II, pp. 270-71

A controversy in the Hall of Worship on the respective merits of the Bible and the Qur'ān aroused, on a certain occasion, an abnormal heat and each side claimed its Scripture as the divine book. Akbar sent for Shaikh Qutb-ud-dīn, a mystic, who challenged the Christian priests to make a peat fire and pass through it with him to prove the truth of his religion. Now, according to Badāūnī, "the fire was made. The Shaikh pulled *one of the Christian priests* by coat and said to him: 'Come on, in the name of God.' But none of the priests had the courage to go"[1] Abul Fazl's version, on the other hand, begins with Padre Radif (Father Rudolf), "singular for his understanding and ability," making "points in the feast of intelligence" and "some of the untruthful bigots" coming forward "in a blundering way to answer him". There being no truth present in their arguments, the adversaries of Rudolf "were ashamed, and abandoned such discourse, and applied themselves to perverting the words of the Gospels." Then, Rudolf challenged to have the issue decided by resort to a trial by fire but "the liverless and black-hearted fellows wavered, and in reply to the challenge had recourse to bigotry and wrangling. This cowardice and effrontery displeased his (Akbar's) equitable soul."[2]

The Italian missionary Rudolf Aquaviva, who had called upon Akbar, was also accompanied by a Spaniard Anthony Monserrate and a Persian convert Francis Henriquez. Monserrate has left a narrative of his experiences at the Akbar's court in a Latin work entitled *Mongolicae Legationis Commentarius* in which he absolves Rudolf of the charge of cowardice but acknowledges that the challenge came from the Muslim divine and it was rejected by Rudolf on the ground that it amounted to tempting God and was contrary to the Christian religion.[3]

Abul Fazl's version of the story, his defence of Rudolf and

1. *Muntakhabut-Tawārīkh*, p. 308
2. *Akbar Nāmah*, Vol. III, p. 369
3. *Commentarius*, pp. 39-42

the diatribe against Muslim scholars couched in the language of a bitter fanatic hardly establish him as a man of lofty and blameless character with a liberal outlook. We find several other instances of his tempering with facts or concealing them which show that he was as much a bigot as the orthodox whom he cursed for their fanaticism. It should not have been difficult for a man of his genius to turn the illiterate monarch against Islam in his bid to break the power and spell of the religious scholars whom he considered his inveterate enemies.

Ma'āthir ul-Umarā cites Jahāngīr as saying: "Shaikh Abul Fazl had led my revered father to believe that his speech was exceptionally graceful and that the Qur'ān was his own composition. Therefore, when he was returning from Deccan I asked Bīr Singh Deo to kill him. After his death, my revered father renounced that belief."[1]

But, a confession by Abul Fazl is the most conclusive evidence for it indicates, in unmistakable terms, that he felt conscience-smitten at the role played by him in raising the Emperor to the level of impeccable leader and universal guide.[2] It seems that at times he reproached himself for the wrong committed by him. In a letter addressed to Khān Khānān, he writes:

> "A tragic aspect of this calamitous story is that the writer of these lines has, by his entaglement in unavailing tasks, degraded himself from a worshipper of God to the slave of his instincts and reached such a stage that he

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1. *Ma'āthir ul-Umarā*, p. 617; Saiyid Sabāh-ud-dīn Abdur Rahmān writes in the *Bazm-i-Taimūriyah* that the statement attributed to Jahāngir is not to be found in the Newal Kishore edition of the *Tūzuk-i Jahāngīrī*, but it is corroborated by the copy used by Major David Price for the translation of Jahāngīr's Memoirs into English, (p. 166)
2. Abul Fazl's veneration of Akbar amounts almost to Akbar's adoration. Mark the titles of honour used by him for Akbar: 'of pureheart—unspotted by the world—leader of spiritual realm—of enduring alertness' (p. 3), 'supplicant of God' (p. 520), 'the world's lord' (p. 481). See *Akbar Nāmah*, Vol. III.

should be known as the serf of the pelf instead of a bondman of God..... He expresses his grief through these lines for he is aware that his foolish strivings of forty-three years, especially the tussle he has had with the timeservers during the last twelve years, have left him neither capable of self-restraint nor of abstinence. I write this to make a public confession of my weaknesses :

I have neither the strength to abstain from love,
Nor the luck to meet the friend.
I do not have the hands to fight my destiny,
Nor do I have the legs to get away from it."[1]

Influence of Rājpūt Spouses

A great test for Akbar and also one of the important reasons for his abjuring Islam was the matrimonial alliances he had established with the Rājpūt rulers and, then, for being closer to them and winning their confidence he raised them to the highest positions. With the same end in view he adopted such customs and habits as were never practised by the preceding kings and sultāns of India. He forbade slaughter of the cows, gave *darshan* to his Hindu subjects every morning facing the sun, shaved the beard, put a mark on his forehead according to Hindu fashion, observed Hindu festivals and ceremonies alongwith the Rājpūt ladies in his haram and did several other things of the kind. One of his wives was the daughter of Rājā Bihārī Mal of Amber who eventually became the mother of Jahāngīr. Akbar also received in his service Mān Singh, the nephew and adopted son of Bhagwān Dās, Bihārī Mal's heir. His other Rājpūt consorts were a relation of Rai Kalyān Mal, Rājā of Bīkāner and the daughter of Rawal Har Rā'i of Jaisalmer. It was but natural that Akbar would have been influenced by his Rājpūt spouses and their kinsmen on whose support he depended for strengthening his empire. Actually, these kinships contributed to a personal

1. *Inshā-i-Abul Fazl*, Vol. II, p. 102, (Lucknow, 1883)

bitterness which finally led Akbar to nurse a grouse against the Muslim orthodoxy.

This eventful episode came about in this manner. One Qāzī 'Abdur Rahīm of Mathura laid a complaint before Shaikh 'Abdun Nabī that a wealthy and stiff-necked Brahman of that place had carried off the materials he had collected for the construction of a mosque, and had built of them a temple, and that when the Muslims attempted to prevent him, the Brahman had cursed the Prophet. Shaikh 'Abdun Nabī called upon the Brahman to appear before him. The Emperor deputed Bīrbal and Abul Fazl to enquire into the matter who reported back that the complaint against the Brahman was correct. The Shaikh decided that the Brahman should suffer death for his crime, but as he was the personal priest of the Queen, she interceded for his release. At last, Shaikh 'Abdun Nabī passed orders for execution of the Brahman, but Akbar was exceedingly wroth at the importunity of the Shaikh in getting that verdiet put into effect without waiting for his orders. The matter did not come to an end with the execution of the Brahman for it caused a great irritation to Akbar and his spouses. Badāūnī reports that "the ladies of his harem compained in private and the Hindu courtiers in public, saying, "you have pampered these Mullās till their insolence has reached such a pitch that they pay no heed to your wishes".[1] Akbar continued to ascertain the punishment to be inflicted on accusers of the Prophet according to the prevalent Hanafite Law. He was ultimately led to believe by the opponents of the Shaikh that the latter had not acted in accordance with the law of the land.

From this time forth the fortunes of Shaikh 'Abdun Nabī began to decline.

Infallibility Decree

The incident also provided an opportunity to Shaikh

1. *Muntakhabut-Tawārikh*, Vol. III, pp. 128-30

Mubārak, already inaflamed with rancour and ill will, to advise Akbar that he should get rid of the doctors of religion. When asked to express his opinion about the matter agitating the mind of Akbar, he replied, "Your Majesty is the Imām and Mujtahid of the age. What need have you of these 'Ulamā' for assistance in issuing your commands, whether religious or secular !"[1] It was after this incident that Shaikh Mubārak wrote a decree affirming the religious supremacy of the Emperor and his superiority to all ecclesiastical dignitaries which ultimately proved to be the fore-runner of Akbar's apostasy and ensuing state policy fostering intellectual and cultural perversion. This Decree stated that :

> "The rank of Sultān-i-'ādil[2] is higher in the eyes of God than the rank of a Mujtahid[3]. "
>
> "Further we declare that the King of Islām, Amir of the Faithful, shadow of God in the world, Abu-l-Fath Jalāl-ud-din Muhammad Akbar Bādshāh Ghāzī (whose kingdom God perpetuate!) is a most just, a most wise, and a most God-fearing king."
>
> "Should therefore in future a religious question come up, regarding which the opinions of the Mujtahids are at variance, and His Majesty in his penetrating understanding and clear wisdom be inclined to adopt, for the benefit of the nation, and as a political expedient, any of the conflicting opinions, which exist on that point, and issue a decree to that effect, we do hereby agree that such a decree shall be binding on us and on the whole nation."[4]

This document was prepared in Rajab 987 A.H.[5] and became an imperial decree for the whole country. All the doctors of

1. *Muntakhabut-Tawārikh*, Vol. III, p. 131
2. Just ruler
3. Authority on point of law.
4. *Muntakhabut-Tawārikh*, Vol. II, p. 279
5. August-September, 1579 A.D.

religion were made to affix their signatures, in compliance with the wish of Akbar, on the document which made the decisions of the Emperor infalliable even in religious matters, and thus opened the way to tergiversation from the path of Islam. Shaikh Mubārak was last to sign the document but he added after his signature : "This is an affair which I desired with all my heart and soul, and for the accomplishment of which I have been waiting for years."[1]

Significance of the Decree

The notion of extending unconditional support to a ruler and defence of his illegal actions through specious arguments and misinterpretation of the sacred law is not entirely foreign to the annals of Islamic countries. The religious scholars had blundered several times and given their assent to a royal decree which was unbecoming of their exalted position but never had they set their seal on a document prepared avowedly for a purpose contrary to the interests of Islam by a scheming mind like Shaikh Mubārak. The document conferred an authority on the young king[2] over the doctors of law and allowed him to adopt one of the conflicting opinions delivered by the jurists of Islam. One who was illiterate was acclaimed as the most just, wise and enlightened with the knowledge of God; this man was already inclined towards free-going; his confidence in the scholars of Islam had already been shaken; and he was adopting polytheistic customs and manners under the polluting influence of his court and household. And he was also an absolute ruler, an undisputed master of his dominions. It is not difficult to see that he

1. *Cambridge History of India*. Vol. IV, p. 123. As Badāūnī claims, Shaikh Mubārak was the chief contriver of the affair, and it was he who drafted the document. Nizām-ud-dīn also mentions Mubārak (*Tabaqāt*, Vol. II, p. 523) as one of the signatories but it is curious that Abul Fazl does not mention his father Mubārak as one of those who signed the document.
2. Akbar was only thirty-eight years of age at the time.

could have been easily exploited by those self-seeking and unscrupulous courtiers who were careful to offend the king in nothing and lead him to relinquish every limit prescribed by religion. Their only aim was discomfiture of their opponents. A man so learned as Shaikh Mubārak would not have failed to visualize the outcome of his actions and thus it is not difficult to see what his motive was in taking this course. A historian to whom everything is clear today can ask him in the words of an Arab poet who said :

'It was regrettable if you did not know the outcome of your action,
But terrible it was, if you knew and did it knowingly.'

Fall of Makhdūm-ul-Mulk and Sadr-as-Sudūr

Signing of the Infallibility Decree, zealously supported by Shaikh Mubārak, marked an increase in the influence of his sons, Faizī and Abul Fazl, and a decline in the authority of Makhdūm-ul-Mulk Mullā 'Abdullah of Sultānpūr and Sadr-as-Sudūr Maulānā 'Abdun Nabī of Gangoh. Both these persons withdrew themselves and avoided attending the court, but they were seized one day and on being brought to the court were made to sit in the row of shoes.[1] Not long thereafter both were banished to Mecca. Makhdūm-ul-Mulk left for Hijāz, in 987/1579, where he was warmly received by the scholars. Shaikh Shahāb-ud-dīn Ahmad b. Hajar Haitamī, an eminent scholar of the time, showed greatest marks of honour to, Makhdūm-ul-Mulk. He returned to India in 990/1582 after an stay of about three years in Hijaz but was administered poison on reaching Gujarāt and died at that place. There are reasons to believe that he was poisoned at the instance of the Emperor. Khawāfī Khān has laid this charge on Akbar in the *Ma'āthir-ul-Umarā*.[2]

1. *Muntakhabut-Tawārikh*, Vol. III, p. 131
2. *Nuzhatul Khawātir*, Vol. IV

Shaikh 'Abdun Nabī also went to perform the *haj*. After remaining there for sometime he returned to India as if he still hoped to regain the position and honour lost by him. He approached the Emperor through Gulbadan Begum for being forgiven. As 'Abdul Qādir Badāunī says, the Emperor had him arrested and handed him over to Rājā Todar Mal to make him settle the account of some money given to him. He died as a prisoner but the *Ma'āthir-ul-Umarā* records that Akbar had later on asked Abul Fazl to deal with the Shaikh, whom he eventually strangled in the prison.[1]

The New Millennium and Divine Faith

The next step, after making Akbar an Infallible Emperor and indisputable religious guide, was to invent a new religion. Islam was soon to complete one thousand years of its existence; the new millennium was treated by many as the advent of a new era, a new life of the world; they expected a new religion, a new order and a new law-giver for the new millennium; and nobody was better suited to act as its heralder than the Emperor already recognised as the most just and wise. Badāunī writes:

> "And since, in His Majesty's opinion, it was a settled fact that the 1000 years since the time of the mission of the Prophet (peace be upon him), which was to be the period of the continuance of the faith of Islam, were now completed, no hinderance remained to the promulgation of those secret designs, which he nursed in his heart."[2]

1. *Nuzhatul Khawātir*, Vol IV. M'utmad Khān writes in the *Iqbāl Nāmah*, (Vol. II, account of the 27th year) that Shaikh 'Abdun Nabī was put in the charge of Abul Fazl who by reason of his old enmity had him strangled. Abul Fazl (*Akbar Nāmah*, Vol. III, pp. 572-73) simply says that he died in the prison but does not give the reason, which must have been known to him. His silence on the subject is not without significance.
2. *Muntakhabut-Tawārikh*, Vol. II, p. 311

Akbar now felt at liberty to embark fearlessly on his designs of annulling and altering the ordinances of Islam. The first command that was issued was this : that the "Era of the Thousand" should be stamped on the coins, and that a *Tārīkh-i-Alfi*,[1] a new history marking the line of demarcation in human civilisation should be written. The board of seven scholars charged to complete the task was ordered to date the events with reference to the death of the Prophet instead of his migration from Mecca.[2]" The commonalty was made to believe that it was the time when the leader of the world should appear to efface the difference between the sects of Islam, and it could be nobody else save the Emperor with angelic qualities.

Thus began the 'Divine Faith' of Akbar. Its creed enjoined not faith in one God but star-worship in the form of divine service to the sun while resurrection on the Day of Judgement was rejected in favour of rebirth. Akbar used to admit disciples to his faith with a formula of testimony which added *Akbar Khalīfat Allāh* (Akbar is the vicegerant of God) after *Lā Ilāh Illallāh* (There is no god but God). The disciples were also required to sign a covenant which ran as follows :

> I, so and so, son of so and so, do voluntarily with sincere prediliction and inclination, utterly and entirely renounce and repudiate the religion of Islam which I have seen and heard of my fathers, and do embrace the Divine Religion of Akbar Shāh, and do accept the four grades of entire devotion, viz. sacrifice of property, life, honour and religion."[3]

Usury, gambling, wine and pork were made lawful by the new religion, slaughter of cows was banned, the laws relating to marriage were amended, *purdah*[4] and circumcission were for-

1. *Muntakhabut-Tawārīkh*, Vol. II, p. 311
2. *Ibid.*, p. 327
3. *Ibid.*, p. 314
4. Seclusion of women in their houses.

bidden, prostitutes were settled in a separate ward and rules were made for the trade of flesh and religious form of burial was changed. In short, a new Indian religion was devised which, like the religions of old, met halfway the passions and desires of carnal nature and made it a handmaid of personal and political interests of the king[1].

Akbar's religious Ideas and Practices

What religious doctrines and practices Akbar's vanity had persuaded him to adopt can be seen from the descriptions left by his closest friend and favourite, Abul Fazl 'Allāmī. These are but a few references to the religious metamorphosis of Akbar but they are sufficient enough to demonstrate how he tried to shackle and choke off Islam.

Fire Worship

"His Majesty maintains that it is a religious duty and

1. Dr. Vincent Smith says that "the whole gist of the regulations was to further the adoption of Hindu, Jain and Parsi practices, while discouraging or positively prohibiting essential Muslim rites. The policy of insult to and persecution of Islam which was carried to greater extremes subsequently, was actively pursued, even in the period from 1582 to 1585." Another historian, Wolsely Haig, writes that Akbar's "discourse was ever of universal toleration, but in practice he excepted the faith in which he had been bred". (*Cambridge History of India*, Vol. IV, pp. 125, 131). Another scholar, Dr. A. L. Srivastava, who has put up a spirited defence of Akbar's religious policies, says that Jainism alone was not responsible for the effect on "Akbar's belief and conduct. Hinduism had an undoubted share." (*Akbar the Great*, Vol. I, p. 400). V. D. Mahajan writes in the *Muslim Rule in India* that "as the Hindus had great sanctity for cows, the use of beef was forbidden." (Part II, p. 95). Yet another historian who defends Akbar's religious policy, admits that "The Emperor's disregard of the religion of the Prophet, which was manifest in the rules and regulations issued by him further exasperated the learned in the law and produced a great uneasiness in the minds of the Muslims, (Dr. Ishwari Prasad, *The Mughal Empire*, p. 248.)

divine praise to worship fire and light; surely, ignorant men consider this forgetfulness of the Almighty, and fire-worship. But the deep-sighted know better."[1]

"And when the sun sets, the attendants light twelve white candles, on twelve candlesticks of gold and silver, and bring them before His Majesty, when a singer of sweet melodies, with a candle in his hand, sings a variety of delightful airs to the praise of God, beginning and concluding with a prayer for the continuance of this auspicious reign."[2]

Sun Worship

"The *Do-Āshiyānā Manzil*, or house of two storeys, is raised upon eighteen pillars, six yards in height which support a wooden platform, and into this, pillars of four cubits in length are fixed with bolts and nuts, forming an upper storey. The inside and outside are ornamented, as in the preceding. On the march it is used by His Majesty as a sleeping apartment, and also as a place of divine worship, where he prays to the Sun."[3]

A happy saying of His Majesty on the subject is: "A special grace proceeds from the sun in favour of kings, and for this reason they pray and consider it a worship of the Almighty; but the short-sighted are thereby scandalised.'[4]

His Majesty's another utterance runs: "How can the common people possessed only with the desire of gain, look with respect upon sordid men of wealth? From ignorance these fail in reverence to this fountain of light, and reproach him who prays to it. If their understanding were not at fault how could they forget the *surah* beginning '*By the Sun*".[5]

1. *Ā'in-i-Akbari*, Vol. I, p. 50
2. *Ibid.*, p. 51
3. *Ibid.*, p. 56
4. *Ibid.*, Vol. III, p. 435
5. *Ibid.*, Vol. III, p. 435

On Painting

One day at a private party of friends, His Majesty, who had conferred on several the pleasure of drawing near him, remarked: "There are many that hate painting; but such men I dislike. It appears to me as if a painter had quite peculiar means of recognizing God, for a painter in sketching anything that has life, and in devising its limbs, one after the other, must come to feel that he cannot bestow individuality upon his work, and is thus forced to think of God, the giver of life, and will thus increase his knowledge."[1]

Timings of Prayer

"He passes every moment of his life...in adoration of God. He especially does so at the time, when morning spreads her azure silk, and scatters abroad her young, golden beams; and at noon, when the light of the world-illuminating sun embraces the universe, and thus becomes a source of joy for all men; in the evening when that fountain of light withdraws from the eyes of mortal man."[2]

Prostration before His Majesty

"They (the disciples of His Majesty) look upon a prostration before His Majesty as a prostration performed before God."[3]

"At the above mentioned time of everlasting auspiciousness, the novice with his turban in his hands, puts his head on the feet of His Majesty. This is symbolical, and expresses that the novice, guided by good fortune and the assistance of his good star, has cast aside conceit and selfishness, the root of so many evils, offers his heart in worship, and now comes

1. *A'in-i-Akbari*, Vol. I, p. 115
2. *Ibid.*, p. 163
3. *Ibid.*, Vol. I, p. 167

to inquire as to means of obtaining everlasting life."[1]

Salutation of Divine Faith

"The members of the Divine Faith, on seeing each other, observe the following custom. One says, *'Allāh-o-Akbar'*, and the other responds, *'Jall-a-Jalālhu'*."[2]

Aversion to Hijrī Calendar

"His Majesty had long desired to introduce a new computation of years and months throughout the fair region of Hindustān in order that perplexity might give place to easiness. He was likewise averse to the era of the *Hijra* (Flight) which was of ominous signification, but because of the number of shortsighted, ignorant men who believe the currency of the era to be inseparable from religion, His Imperial Majesty in his graciousness, dearly regarding the attachment ot the hearts of his subjects did not carry out his design of suppressing it."[3]

Un-Islamic Feasts and Festivals

"The new Year's Day feast—It commences on the day when the Sun in his splendour moves to Aries, and lasts till the nineteenth day of the month (*Farwardīn*). Two days of this period are considered great festivals, when much money and numerous other things are given away as presents; the first day of the month of *Farwardīn*, and the nineteenth, which is time of *Sharaf*. Again, His Majesty followed the custom of the ancient Parsis, who held banquets on those days the names of which coincided with the name of a month.[4] The following are the days which have the same name as a

1. *Ā'īn-i-Akbarī*, p. 174
2. *Ibid.*, p. 175
3. *Ibid*. Vol. II, p. 30
4. Thus *Ābān* was the name of the eighth month (October-November); but the tenth day also of every month had the same name.

month: 19th *Farwardīn*; 3rd *Urdībihishtī*; 6th *Khūrdād*; 13th *Tir*; 7th *Amūrdād*; 4th *Shahriwār*; 16th *Mihr*; 10th *Ābān*; 9th *Āzar*; 8th, 15th, 23rd Day; 2nd *Bahman*; 15th *Isfandarmuz*."[1]

Vegetarianism

His Imperial Majesty said, "Were it not for the thought of the difficulty of sustenance, I would prohibit men from eating meat. The reason why I do not altogether abandon it myself is that many others might willingly forego it likewise and be thus cast into despondency. From my earliest years, whenever I ordered animal food to be cooked for me, I found it rather tasteless and cared little for it."[2]

His Majesty also said, "Butchers, fishermen and the like who have no other occupation but taking life, should have a separate quarter and their association with others should be prohibited by fine."[3]

"His Majesty has also ordered that members (of his Divine Faith) should endeavour to abstain from eating flesh......during the month of their birth they are not even to approach meat... Neither shall they make use of the same vessels with butchers, fishers and bird catchers."[4]

Swine

His Imperial Majesty observed, "If the reason of the prohibition of swine (as food) be due to its vileness, lions and the like should be held lawful."[5]

1. *Āin-i-Akbarī*, Vol. I, p. 286
2. *Ibid.*, Vol. III, p. 446
3. *Ibid.*, Vol. III, p. 446. This was the old Hindu and a Buddhistic rule, Fa Hien observed that in North India in 399 A.D., "Only the Chandālās are fishermen and hunters sell flesh meat.........They are held to be wicked men, and live apart from others."
4. *Ā'in-i-Akbarī*, Vol. I, p. 176
5. *Ibid.*, Vol. III, p. 441

Drinking Bout

"The Sadr and Abd'l-Hay, the Chief Justice of the Empire, took part in a drinking feast, and Akbar was so amused at seeing his ecclesiastical and judicial dignitaries over their cups, that he quoted the well-known verse from Hāfiz:

> "In the era of King, clement and fault-forgiving,
> The Qāzī sucked up flagons, the Mufti drained the cup."[1]

Adoption of the Un-Islamic Customs

"One of the occurances was the death of Bica Jio[2]......... and the world's lord was sad. In his grief he shaved his head and moustaches, and though he tried that none should shave except her children, his faithful servants followed suit."[3]

Rejection of Miracles

The Emperor said, "The vulgar believe in miracles, but the wise men accept nothing without adequate proof."[4]

Dislike for Circumcision

His Imperial Majesty observed, "It is remarkable that men should insist on ceremoney of circumcision for children who are otherwise excused from the burden of all religious obligations."[5]

Marriage Regulations

Marriage between near relations His Majesty thinks highly improper......He says, "Marriage between first cousins, however, does not strike the bigoted followers of Muhammad's religion

1. *Ā'īn-i-Akbarī*, Vol. I, p. 522
2. Jījū Anga, the foster mother of Akbar
3. *Akbar Nāmah*, Vol. III, p. 1153
4. *Ā'īn-i-Akbarī*, Vol. III, p. 428
5. *Ibid.*, p. 441

as wrong; for the beginning of a religion resembles, in this regard, the beginning of the creation of mankind......Nor does His Majesty approve of any one marrying more than one wife."[1]

Divine Worship of Kings

His Majesty said, "The very sight of kings has been held to be a part of divine worship. They have been styled conventionally as the shadow of God, and indeed to behold them is a means of calling to mind the Creator, and suggests the protection of the Almighty."[2]

Introduction of Ilāhī Calendar

"In 992 (A.D. 1584) of the Novilunar year, the lamp of knowledge received another light from the flame of his sublime intelligence and its full blaze shone upon mankind. The fortunately gifted, lovers of truth raised their heads from the pillow of disappointment and the crooked-charactered, drowsy-willed lay in the corner of disuse. Meanwhile the Imperial design was accomplished. Amīr Fathullah Shīrāzī, the representative of ancient sages, the paragon of the house of wisdom, set himself to the fulfilment of this object, and taking as his base the recent Gurgānī Canon, began the era with the accession of His Imperial Majesty."[3]

There appears to be no harm, after giving an outline of Akbar's religious thought by a historian who cannot be accused of bigotry or bearing any ill-will to him, in supplementing this description with the details given by Nizām-ud-dīn and 'Abdul Qādir Badāūnī. Akbar's aversion to Islam, established by the statements of Abul Fazl, goes to strengthen the charge laid by Badāūnī that Akbar had not only forsaken his faith in Islam

1. *Ā'in-i Akbari,* Vol. I, p. 268
2. *Ibid.*, Vol. III, p. 450
3. *Ibid.*, Vol. II, p. 30

but also detested everything connected with that faith and its founder.

Remission of Zakāt

"The beginning of this year was Saturday the fifth of Safar, 989 A.H.[1] During this year in accordance with his natural kindness and inherent generosity, (the emperor) issued an order for abolition in the whole of his dominion of the *Tamgha*[2] and the *zakāt* and *farmāns* founded on justice were issued to emphasise this act."[3]

Disapproval of Islamic Learning

"Reading and learning of Arabic was looked as a crime; the Muhammadan law, and the exegesis of the Qur'ān, and the Traditions, as also those who studied them were considered bad and deserving of disapproval....Two verses from the *Shāhnāma* which Firdausī of Tus gives as part of a story, were frequently quoted at Court:—

Through the eating of the milk of camels and lizards,
The Arabs have made such progress,
That they now wish to get hold of the kingdom of Persia,
Fie upon Fate! Fie upon Fate!"[4]

Mockery of Prophet's Ascension

"One night the Emperor, in Fath-ullah's presence, said to

1. 10th or 11th March, 1581 A.D. It is noteworthy that Abul Fazl omits to mention the abolition of *zakāt* in the *Akbar Nāmah* in his barefaced partiality to preserve the dignity of his master. A reference to it has, however, been made by him in his letters (*Inshā'at Abul Fazl*, Lucknow, 1281, pp. 67-68). These edicts were issued in 26th year of Akbar's reign according to Nizām-ud-din and in the 25th year according to Badāūni.
2. *Tamgha* originally meaning a seal or any document bearnig a seal, was rent-free land given for religious and charitable purposes.
3. *Tabaqāt-i-Akbarī*, Vol. II, pp. 526-27
4. *Muntakhabut-Tawārīkh*, Vol. II, p. 317

Bīr Bar, "I really wonder how any one in his senses can believe that a man, when body has a certain weight, could in the space of a moment leave his bed; there are 90,000 conversations with God, and yet on his return finds his bed still warm!" So also was the splitting of the moon ridiculed. "Why", said His Majesty, lifting up one foot, "it is really impossible for me to lift up the other. What silly stories men will believe".[1]

Disparging Remarks about the Prophet

"Other remarks were passed on the 'straying camel'. Some again expressed their astonishment that the Pròphet in the beginning of his career plundered the carvans of Quraish; that he had fourteen wives......And many other things which it would take too long to recount."[2]

Antipathy and Irritation at the Prophet's Names

"Names like *Ahmad*, *Muhammad*, *Mustafa*, etc. became offensive to His Majesty, who thereby wished to please the infidels outside and the princes inside the Harem, till after some time those courtiers, who had such names, changed them; and such names as *Yār Muhammad*, *Muhammad Khān*, were altered to *Rahmat*."[3]

Prohibition of Prayer

"During those days also the public prayers, and the *azān*

1. *Muntakhabut-Tawārīkh*, Vol. II, p. 326
2. *Ibid.* p. 318
3. *Muntakhabut-Tawārīkh*, Vol II, p. 324. Accordingly, Abul Fazl omits in the *Aīn-i-Akbarī*, (Vol. I) Muhammad and Ahmad from the names of certain Amirs, as, for example, he writes Mun'im Khān for Muhammad Mun'im (p. 333), Mirzā 'Azīz for Mirzā Muhammad 'Azīz (p. 343) and Shīhāb Khān for Shihāb-ud-din Ahmad Khān (p. 352). Many more examples of similar nature can be given.

(call to prayer), which was chanted five times a day for assembly to prayer in the state hall, were abolished".[1]

"The prayers of Islam, the fast, nay even the pilgrimage, were henceforth forbidden."[2]

Mockery of Islamic Values

"Abul Fazl, when once in favour with the Emperor, took every opportunity of reviling in the most shameful way that sect whose labours and motives have been so little appreciated."[3]

A Dangerous Turning Point for Muslim India

The religious policy of Akbar has ever remained a controversial issue for the historians of Mughal Rule in India. Some of them like Muhammad Husain Azad, S.R. Sharma, Dr. R.P. Tripathi, Dr. Ishwari Prasad and others have taken pains to argue that Akbar lived and died as a Muslim and that *Dīn-i-Ilāhī* was neither a religion nor Akbar ever intended the establishment of a church. They reject the testimony of Badāūnī as reckless and indiscriminate and swayed by fanaticism. Their argument rests on the ground that Badāūnī's charges are not substantiated by Abul Fazl and other contemporary accounts save the Jesuit versions which, however, show reliance on hearsy and apprehensions of the orthodox party in Akbar's court. These historians place confidence only in court chronicles and shut their eyes to the mass of contemporary accounts found in the biographies, memoirs, letters and the discourses (*malfūzāt*) of the sufi Shaikhs written during the period. What is still more surprising, they lightly pass over the references to Akbar's un-Islamic views and measures given in the *Āin-i-Akbarī* itself some of which have

1. *Muntakhabut-Tawārīkh*, Vol. II, p. 324.
2. *Ibid*, p. 316
3. *Ibid*, p. 202

been quoted by us. Actually, we find a few references even in the other writings of Abul Fazl as, for example, in the *Akbar Nāmah* Akbar is described as enlisting thousands of disciples (*chelās*) to his new religion in the twenty-seventh year of his rule.[1] *Ā'in-i-Akbari* also mentions many thousand novices belonging to all classes.[2] These historians are never weary of praising Abul Fazl's catholicity and broadmindedness but conveniently forget that several historians who have studied Abul Fazl's writings have accused him of suppressing the truth[3] and warned 'against the prejudice which he draws on his favourites by his fawning fulsome adulation..., and against the suspicions which he excites by his dishonest way of telling a story, even in cases where the action related was innocent or excusable.'[4] Of a fact, no historian who is motivated or unsympathetic to Islam can be expected to make an assessment of the great harm done to the faith of the Prophet by Akbar's religious policies. These writers, however, acknowledge the fact that Akbar's religious policy was a complete failure and some have now began to realise that if Akbar had pursued the policy of religious neutrality, the complicated communal problem of India would have found a correct solution very long ago.[5]

In short, an inevitable outcome of Akbar's religious policy was that the monotheistic way of life and system of belief which had taken four hundred years' labour of the most virtuous and spiritually illuminated persons to take root in the country, were laid open to a comprehensive danger of religious, intellectual and cultural apostasy. The most powerful empire of its day was on the back of this aggression which

1. *Akbar Nāmah*, Vol. III, p. 558
2. *Āin-i-Akbari*, Vol. I, p. 174
3. Beveridge's Introduction to the *Akbar Nāmah*, Vol. III, p. ix
4. Elliot in Introduction to *Akbar Nāmah*, *The History of India as told by its own Historians*, Vol. VI, p. 7
5. A. L. Srivastava, *Sher Shah and his Successors*

was being abetted by quite a few sharp-witted, learned and astute brains. If the shape of things had remained unchanged and no towering personality had come forward to stem the tide of un-Islamic current of thoughts and doctrines, the country would have in the eleventh century gone the way of the nineth century Islamic Andalusia, now known to the world as Spain, or it would have become a fore-runner of what happened in Turkistān after its conquest by Russia in the fourteenth century. But, as a poet has said: a man came from nowhere and did the feat.

I think it more befitting to close this chapter with the picturesque description of Islam's chequered career in India from the forceful pen of an erudite historian and scholar, Syed Sulaimān Nadwī :

> "A thousand years after the traveller had begun his journey, and after four hundred years passed over in slumber, a wizard coming from Irān in the reign of Akbar, whispered to the Emperor that the faith of the Prophet had come to the journey's end on the completion of its first millennium; and it was high time for an illiterate Emperor to replace the religion of the unlettered Prophet by his own *Dīn-i-Ilāhi.* The Magians lit the holy fire, the Christians rang the church bells, Brahmins bedecked the idols and the yoga and mysticism joined hands to illuminate the temple and mosque with the same light. Anybody desirous to get a glimpse of this multicoloured religion should go through the *Dabistān-i-Mazāhib.* He would see many a person with a rosary in his hand and a sacred thread round his neck; grandees prostrating before the Emperor, scholars servilely waiting upon the monarch and the sermoners telling the faithful in the mosque: *Glorified is He, Allāh-o-Akbar.*
>
> All this was going on when a caller from Sirhind called out, "Clear the way, he comes who has to walk the track." A renovator, a descendant of the Great Caliph

'Umar, appeared on the scene and this was Ahmad of Sirhind."[1]

1. Introduction to ***Seerat Saiyid Ahmad Shahid***, Vol. I, pp. 30-31.

CHAPTER IV

MUJADDID ALF THANI

Family

Shaikh Ahmad was a direct descendant of Caliph 'Umar, with 31 intermediaries between the two. His pedigree confirmed from various sources[1] is as follows:

Shaikh Ahmad (Mujaddid Alf Thānī) b. Makhdūm 'Abdul Ahd b. Zainul 'Ābidīn, b. 'Abdul Ha'i b. Muhammad b. Habīb Ullah b. Imām Raf'ī-ud-dīn b. Nasīr-ud-dīn b. Sulaimūn b. Yūsuf b. Is'hāq b. 'Abdullah b. Shu'aib b. Ahmad b. Yūsuf b. Shihāb-ud-dīn 'Ali Farrukh Shāh b. Nūr-ud-dīn b. Nasīr-ud-dīn b. Mahmūd b. Sulaimān b. Mas'ūd b. 'Abdullāh al-Wa'iz al-Asghar b. 'Abdullāh al-Wāiz. al-Akbar b. Abul Fath b. Is'hāq b.

1. A descendant of the Mujjaddid, Shāh Abul Hasan Zaid Farūqi has traced the genealogy in the *Muqāmat-i-Khair* (pp. 26-33) and taken pains to correct a few mistakes found in other sources. Others who have discussed the matter, and reached the same conclusion are Shāh Muhammad Hasan Mujaddidī of Sāin Dād, Sind, Mahmūd Ahmad Abbāsī and Ahmad Husain Khān. *Jawāhar-M'asūmī* by the last mentioned need be seen in this connexion.

Ibrahīm b. Nāsīr b. Abdullāh b. 'Umar b. Hafs b. 'Āsim b. 'Abdullah b. 'Umar.

Shihāb-ud-din 'Alī Farrukh Shāh who ruled over Kābul, has been mentioned as the fifteenth predecessor of Mujaddid in this genealogical table. His descendants included such luminaries as the well-known mystic Shaikh Bābā Farīd Ganj Shakar. Shaikh Nūr-ud-dīn, the grandson of Shaikh Nasīr-ud-dīn, was also a man distinguished for his learning and purity of spirit. However, little is known about others since hardly any biographical works save those written about the Mujaddid or his family seem to have beeu preserved.[1] Shihāb-ud-dīn Alī Farrukh Shāh had devoted his life to spread the light of Islam.

Shihāb-ud-dīn 'Ali Farrukh Shāh tried, on taking the helm after the death of his father, to make peace between the Mughals and the Afghāns. He possessed, besides authority, an illuminated heart and guided a large number of persons on the path of spiritual ascent. Shortly before he left this fleeting world, he abdicated in favour of his son Shaikh Yūsuf and withdrew himself to a gorge still known as Darra Farrukh Shāh, sixty miles to the north of Kābul, for leading a secluded life in the remembrance of God. He died there and his grave still exists in that valley.

Shaikh Yūsuf took the lessons in spiritual discipline from his father. Just and God-fearing, he proved his worth as a capable and popular suzerain, but he was also smitten, like his father, with the love of God. He held dear to his heart what Rūmī has beautifully indited in one of his couplets.

> Mastership of the World! 'tis lawful for the worshipers of moulding;
> I am serf to the King of love, ever abiding.

He also renounced the crown before the end of his life's journey, handing it over to his son Ahmad who was, however,

1. Like *Zubdatul-Muqāmāt; Hazarāt-ul-Quds*, etc.
2. *Zubdatul-Muqāmāt*, pp. 88-89

also a mendicant in the royal garb. He, too, was so attracted by the love Divine that he gave up all, wealth and autority and bade his sons to keep only a little for their sustenance and distribute the rest of their belongings among the poor and the needy. After taking his initial lessons on the path of spirit from his own father this prince learnt at the feet of the renowned sūfī Shaikh Shihāb-ud-dīn Suhrwardī, and was honoured with the mantle of his spiritual successorship.

This tradition was maintained by the successors of Shaikh Yūsuf and Ahmad who always had themselves aligned with a spiritual mentor of one or the other recognised schools. Several of them made considerable progress on the path of mysticism.

Imām Raf'ī-ud-dīn, who was ninth in the line of descent of Shaikh Shihāb-ud-dīn Farrukh Shāh and sixth predecessor of the Mujaddid, was, as stated in the *Zubdatul-Muqāmāt*, a man of learning as well as an eminent sūfī. Imām Rafī-ud-dīn being a disciple of Saiyid Jalāl-ud-dīn of Bukhārā, popularly known as the Makhdūm Jahāniān Jahān Gasht (d. 785/1383), would have lived during the closing decades of the eighth century or even in the opening years of the ninth one also. He was the first among the Mujaddid's ancestors who emigrated from Kābul to India and took up residence at Sirhind, then called Sahrind. The place was then a forest frequented by wild beasts. There being no habitation between Sāmānah and Sarhind great difficulty was felt in transferring imperial imposts from one place to another. The inhabitants of the surrounding district specially Sarayas, lying at a distance of 6 or 7 *coses*,[1] requested Shaikh Makhdūm Jahāniān to obtain the approval of Sultān Fīroz Shāh for the establishment of a town in the area. The Sultān agreed to the suggestion of Makhdūm and entrusted the job to Khwājā Fathullah, the elder brother of Imām Raf'ī-ud-dīn, who came to Sirhind with a force of two thousand cavalry and got a fort constructed there. Shaikh

1. A *cose* measures about two miles

Makhdūm Jahāniān got the foundation stone of the fort laid by his spiritual successor Imām Raf'ī-ud-dīn, who had settled down at Sunnām, and whom he directed to move on to the new city. Thus the family of Mujaddid came to settle down in Sirhind where it still resides.[1] The fort and the city are reported to have been founded in 760/1359.[2]

Sirhind had thus been a populous city for two hundred years before the birth of the Mujaddid.[3] Other biographical accounts show that Sirhind was the home-town of several other families with scholarly traditions, some of whose scions were noted literati.[4] However, it seems that Sirhind became a centre of Islamic learning in the beginning of the tenth century of Hijra for we seldom find any man of letters, save in the family of the Mujaddid, during the eighth and ninth centuries. In the tenth century, on the other hand, several noted

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1. *Zubdatul Muqāmāt*, pp. 89-90
2. Sirhind was once the chief town of district Sutlej. The Chinese traveller Hiuen-Tsang who came to India in the seventh century has mentioned the city. He says that gold is mined near it. Of the two syllables of its name, *seh* in Hindi means lion and *ind* stands for forest. It also marked, in the bygone times, the limit of the Ghaznavid empire in India and that is why it came to be known as Sir-hind or Sahrind. Muhammad Ghori captured Sirhind in 587/1191 but it does not seem to have attracted the attention of its rulers until the time Firūz Shāh Tughluq ascended the throne. Instead, Sāmānah was regarded as the chief town of the area. The city continued to attract attention since the time of Firūz Shāh Tughluq when it was raised to the level of provincial governorship. Its strategic importance was also recognised by Bābur who visited the place several times. Humāyūn also came to Sirhind before recapturing Delhi. The city was a populous town during the Mughal rule; 360 mosques besides a large number of wells, *sirāis* and mausoleums are reported to have existed in the town. *(Dāiratul Ma'ārif Islāmiyah)*
3. Mujaddid has praised Sirhind for its serenity. Letter No. 22 of the *Maktūbāt*, Vol. II.
4. Yahyā b. Ahmad author of the *Tārikh Mubārak Shāhī*, written about 838/1435, calls himself Assihar-hindī.

scholars and pedagogues are seen engaged in teaching and preaching at Sirhind. Alādād b. Sālih Sirhindī (d. 927/1521) was the foremost in this galaxy of scholars, while others were Sher 'Alī Qādiri (d. 985/1577). 'Ali Sher[1] (d. 985/1577), Muftī Ahmad Sirhindī (d. 986/1578), Ibrāhīm Sirhindī (d. 994/1586), and 'Abdullah Niāzī Mahdawī[2] (d. 1000/1592). A few more noted scholars who find a mention in the historical and biographical works, but whose years of death are not known, were 'Abdul Qādir, the teacher of Makhdūm-ul-Mulk Mullā Abdullah of Sultānpūr, 'Abdus Samad Husainī, Amān Ullah, Qutb-ud-din and Madj-ud-din. The last mentioned was known for his encyclopaedic knowledge whom Bābur met at Sirhind and paid his compliments. We find two more men of letters, Mīr 'Alī and Badr-ud-din Sirhindī, mentioned by the historians.[3]

Makhdūm Shaikh 'Abdul Ahad

Khwājā Muhammad Hāshim Kashmi has given a bit detailed account of Makhdūm Shaikh Ābdul Ahad in the *Zubdat-ul-Muqāmāt.* He spent three years with the Mujaddid and has given a first hand description of the sayings and doings of the Makhdūm based either on his own experiences or learnt from the Mujaddid or from the sons of the Mujaddid. His accounts can, therefore, be taken as an authentic description of the Makhdum's life.

While Shaikh 'Abdul Ahad was engaged in acquiring knowledge he was overcome by religious ecstasy and, forsaking his studies, attached himself as a disciple to the famous sage Shaikh 'Abdul Quddūs of Gangoh. He acquired some of the excellences of the path of spirit from his mentor but when he

1. It is difficult to say whether Sher 'Ali Qādirī and 'Ali Sher were the names of the same person. The *Gulzār-i-Abrār* and *Nuzhatul Khawātir* give their names as mentioned here.
2. It is reported that he abjured Mahadawī faith towards the end of his life.
3. *Nuzhatul Khawātir,* Vol. IV, gives an account of the achievements of all these scholars.

expressed the wish to remain in his attendance for the rest of his life, his learned teacher directed him to complete his formal education. He said, "Mendicity without knowledge has little merit." As Shaikh 'Abdul Quddūs was already too old, 'Abdul Ahad submitted, "I doubt if I would be blessed with your company after completing my education." The Shaikh replied, "If I am not alive by then, attach yourself to my son Rukn-ud-dīn for spiritual ascent." 'Abdul Ahad acted on the advice of his venerable mentor and went away to complete his education.

By the time 'Abdul Ahad completed his studies, Shaikh 'Abdul Quddūs had already left the world for his heavenly abode. He spent some time in paying visits to different mystics of the time but ultimately returned to Shaikh Rukn-ud-dīn from whom he acquired both inward and outward perfection of spirit and obtained permission to enlist disciples as his spiritual successor.[1]

Both Shaikh 'Abdul Quddūs and Shaikh Rukn-ud-dīn were overcome by a mysterious longing after God and often remained in ecstatic transports. Both took recourse to musical recitations. Shaikh 'Abdul Quddūs, although a meticulous follower of the prophetic *sunnah*, was also a great expounder of the doctrine of the Unity of Being. He followed the path of poverty and self-effacement, practised austerities, spent much of his time in prayers and recollection of God and was never unmindful of his last journey.[2]

Makhdūm 'Abdul Ahad had also been attached, in addition to Shaikh 'Abdul Quddūs and Shaikh Rukn-ud-dīn, to a Qādiriyah mystic Shaikh Kamāl of Kaithal who was regarded as one of the venerable mystics or his time.[3] Makhdūm 'Abdul Ahad used to

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1. The certificate of permission awarded by Shaikh Rukn-ud-dīn to Shaikh Abdul Ahad has been copied in the *Zubdatul-Maqāmāt.*
2. For an account of his saintly life see the *Zubdatul-Maqāmāt* by Khwājā Muhammad Hāshīm Kashmī, pp. 97-101 and the *Nuzhatul Khawātir,* Vol. IV
3. For details see *Nuzhatul Khawātir,* Vol. IV

say; "Seen through the inward eye of spirit, one can seldom reckon the exalted station of Shaikh 'Abdul Qādir Jilānī, the founder of the Qādiriyah order." Shāh Kamāl's grandson, Shāh Sikandar had also attained higher stages of spirituality. Makhdūm 'Abdul Ahad benefited from his company also.

After completing his formal education, Makhdūm 'Abdul Ahad went round a number of places in search of men purer in spirit but he had also pledged to himself that he would have nothing to do with any one who indulged in actions disallowed by the *sharī'ah*. He met, during his wanderings, Shaikh Allādād of Rohtās and Muhammad b. Fakhr, the author of the *Tauzīh ul-Hawāshī*. He also attended the lectures of the latter scholar. He repaired to Bengal and thence to Jaunpūr where he spent a few days with Syed 'Ali Qawwām, popularly known as 'Alī 'Āshiqān. He returned to Sirhind, never to leave the place again. He was a gifted teacher who lectured on all the subjects then included in the curriculum for higher studies. As Mudjadid once remarked, he was well-versed in all the sciences and there were few who could rival him in the law and jurisprudence. The jurisprudence of Hanafite school was his favourite subject whose depth and wisdom he would expatiate in a way that spoke of the greatness of Imām Abū Hanīfah. He also taught *tasawwuf* or mysticism, and expounded the intricate points of the *T'arruf*, *'Awārif-ul-Ma'ārif* and *Fusūs al-Hikam* to the satisfaction of his students.

By his own inclination and experiences he took Ibn 'Arabi's mystical doctrine for granted but had an equally great respect for the *sharī'ah* and never uttered a word which could be construed as violating it in letter or spirit. He was utterly selfless, never allowed his students to minister to his personal needs, took meticulous care to follow the *sunnah* even in trivial matters like eating and dressing and never felt weary of undergoing any hardship in fulfilment of the demands of *sharī'ah*. He had pledged allegiance to the Shaikhs of Chishtiyah and Qādiriyah orders, but being sincere a seeker after truth he always

expressed desires to know more about the Naqshbandiyah order and often remarked: 'May God bring it to my country', or 'would that I reached the centre of that noble order'. He was also a penman who had written the *Kunūz-ul-Haqā'iq* and the *Asrār-ut-Tashahhud*.[1]

Mujaddid relates that he had often heard his father saying that the love of the Prophet's household was a guarantee to one's faith. He further says that when the Makhdūm was about to depart from this world, he reminded him of his remark and got the reply: "Praise be to God. I am already drenched in that love and virtue."

Earlier, when the Makhdūm was wandering in search of godly souls, he had once to stay for a short while at Sikandra.[2] Impressed by his moral rectitude and beauty of holiness, a noble resident of the town had given him his daughter in marriage. All the sons of the Makhdūm were born of that wedlock.

Makhdūm 'Abdul Ahad had been blessed with seven sons like his spiritual mentor. We know the names of a few only: Shāh Muhammad, Shaikh Muhammad Mas'ūd, Shaikh Ghulām Muhammad, Shaikh Maudūd[3] and two more of their brothers of whom one was the Mujaddid. All of them were learned and underwent severe discipline in the way of holy endeavour.

The Makhdūm died at the age of eighty years on the 17th of Rajab, 1007.[4] His grave is in Sirhind, about a mile to the

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1. Khwājā Muhammad Hāshim Kashmī has given a few extracts from the *Asrar-ut-Tashahhud* and also a number of sayings of the Makhdūm as related by the Mujaddid. (pp. 118—122).
2. The author of the *Zubdatul Muqāmāt* says that the town was near Etawah in the present Uttar Pradesh.
3. Mujaddid's collection of letters has a few letters addressed to Shaikh Ghulām Muhammad and Shaikh Maudūd.
4. 3rd February, 1599. *Zubdatul Muqāmāt*, p. 122. Certain writers have given the date as 27th Jamādul Ākhir (16th January, 1599) but there is no difference of opinion about the year of death.

west of the city.[1]

The Makhdūm was an outstanding representative of an earnest seeker after truth with a great respect for the *sunnah* and the *sharī'ah*. He also practised severe austerities and strivings in the path of holiness. These qualities were inherited by his son who was destined to take under his wings the treasure of Islam in India and illuminate the whole country with the Divine light bestowed to him.

Birth and Childhood of Mujaddid

Shaikh Ahmad was born in Friday night, the 14th of Shawwāl, 971[2] at Sirhind. From his early childhood he showed the signs of a virtuous disposition.

One of his father's spiritual guide Shāh Kamāl was a godly soul. He was specially attached to the young Ahmad and showed a keen interest in his upbringing. Shāh Kamāl died when the Mujaddid was only seven years of age. The graphic description of Shāh Kamāl's features by the Mujaddid and the house where he last paid a visit to the Shāh in the company of his father is a fine example of the Mujaddid's retentive memory.

Mujaddid began his education by memorising the Qur'ān and learnt it by heart in a few years. Thereafter he started receiving instruction from his father and soon showed the signs of possessing a keen and assimilative mind. After finishing the first phase of his education with his father and certain other teachers of the place, he went to Siālkot which was a well known centre of learning in those days. There he underwent schooling under Maulānā Kamāl of Kashmir who was a renowned teacher of logic, philosophy, scholastics and jurisprudence and had the honour of being a teacher of such an eminent scholar as 'Allama 'Abdul Hakīm of Siālkot. Mujaddid

1. *Zubdatul Muqāmāt*, p. 122
2. 26th May, 1564

studied some of the higher books like the *'Azodi*, included in the curriculum of higher studies in those days from Maulānā Kamāl and the *hadīth* from Shaikh Y'aqūb of Kāshmīr. The latter known as a grammarian had been a disciple of Shaikh Shihāb-ud-din Ahmad b. Hajar Haitmī of Mecca who had been an undisputed authority on his subject and had written a commentary on the *Sahīh* of Bukhārī. Shaikh Y'aqūb was then regarded as the most learned scholar of *hadīth* for he had also received instruction from such scholars as Shaikh 'Abdur Rahmān b. Fahd and Qāzī Bāhlol of Badakhshān. He is reported to have completed his education at the age of seventeen years.

The Mujaddid started his career as a teacher after gaining a thorough knowledge of the religious and secular sciences. He also wrote a few tracts like the *Risālah Tahlīliyah* and the *Risalah Radd Mazhāb Shī'a* in Persian and Arabic. He also went to Agra, then known as Akbarābād, where he came in contact with Faizī and Abul Fazl. He could not, however, make himself comfortable with the two brothers because of the differences of opinion with them. Once Mujaddīd showed his displeasure at certain blasphamous remarks of Abul Fazl and ceased meeting him. Abul Fazl later on sent for the Mujaddid but he excused himself and never went to see him again. This was the time when Faizī was busy in writing his commentary on the Qur'ān entirely in words which contained no dotted letters. Once when he had a difficulty in finding an undotted word to continue his work, he consulted the Mujaddid who solved his difficulty. Faizī open-heartedly acknowledged the wit and learning of the Mujaddid.

Mujaddid prolonged his stay at Agra. He returned to Sirhind when his father came to see him at the capital. During their journey back to home, Shaikh Sultān, the Governor of Thānesar warmly received both the father and son and treated them as his guests. Shaikh Sultān was so impressed by Mujaddid that he offered to give his daughter in marriage to him. The matrimonial relationship was approved by Mujaddid's

father and thus he came back to his home along with his wife.

Spiritual Allegiance to Khwājā Bāqī Billāh

The philosophical and doctrinal aspects of Islamic mysticism, which have already been discussed in the first volume of the *Saviours of Islamic Spirit*, need not be repeated here. The accounts of Khwājā Hasan Basrī, Shaikh 'Abdul Qādir Jīlānī and Maulānā Jalāl-ud-dīn Rūmī throw sufficient light on these issues which have also been touched upon in describing the achievements of two eminent mystics of India in the second volume of these series.

It would suffice to add here that the times in which the Mujaddid had to take ahead his reformatory work, mystical discipline had broadened to become a popular movement in the Indian Muslim society. No scholar could exert a powerful appeal among the elite or even the common folk unless he had undergone schooling under some eminent mystic of a recognised sufī order. Apart from it, nobody could have called the people to betake the path of virtue or reform their morals merely by being a profound teacher or a fluent speaker. Any attempt to give a call for reform and renovation in those times without any spiritual attainment would have been analogus to inviting an armed conflict without possessing the munitions of war. It was necessary for the Mujaddid or, perhaps, an arrangement made by divine dispensation that he was first led to the path of spirit and thus enabled, under the tutelage of some of the most virtuous men of God to acquire the excellence and perfection of the spiritual realm. All this was necessary for the great task he was about to undertake and to leave his indelible mark on the Muslim society spread over a substantially large portion of the world to the end of time.

Mujaddid prolonged his stay at Sirhind till his father's death, attaining the higher reaches of Chishtiyah and Qādiriyah orders under his guidance. He also engaged himself in literary pursuits during that period.

This was the time when Mujaddid was pining for *haj* and paying a visit to the city of the Prophet, but he did not consider it proper to embark on the long journey leaving his old father nearing his end. His father died in 1007/1599, and a year after that in 1008/1600 he left his home for pilgrimage. When he arrived in Delhi, several scholars of the city who were already aware of his literary attainments called upon him. One of these scholars was Maulānā Hasan of Kashmir who had already been introduced to him earlier. Maulānā Hasan told him about Khwājā Bāqī Billāh, a Shaikh of the Naqshbandiyah order, who had arrived in Delhi a few days earlier, and was known to have been endowed with both inward and outward perfection. The Mujaddid having already heard about the merits of Naqshbandiyah order, expressed his desire to meet the Shaikh. He called upon Khwājā Bāqī Billāh in the company of Maulānā Hasan.[1]

Shaikh 'Abdul Bāqī (Khwājā Bāqī Billāh)

Before we proceed further it seems proper to give here a resume of the spiritual attainments of Khwājā Baqī Billāh as described in the *Nuzhatul Khwatir.*[2] His name was Razī-ud-dīn 'Abul Mowayyad 'Abdul Bāqī b. 'Abdus Salām of Badakhshān. Popularly known as Khwājā Bāqī Billāh of Kābul, he had migrated to Delhi and was a profound sage presenting the picture of the Quranic verse : *"We have not created the jinn and man save for Our worship"*. Excelling in devotion, piety and holy endeavour, he was the very crucible of devotion to God emitting the brilliance of love divine. Born about 971-72 A.H.,[3]

1. The Mujaddid, as his letters show, ever remained grateful to Maulānā Hasan for introducing him to Khwājā Bāqī Billāh (*See* letter No. 279 of Volume I).
2. *cf.*, Vol. V. Shah Walī Ullah Dehlawī's *Al-Intibāh fī Salāsil Awliya' Allāh* and the *Ham'āt* may be seen for the biographical accounts of Khwājā Bahā'-ud-din Naqshband, the founder of Naqshbandiyah order.
3. 1563-64 A. D.

at Kābul, he took Maulānā Muhammad Sādiq Halwā'i as his teacher and accompanied him in his tour to Transoxania. There he set his heart on betaking the path of spirit and terminated his education to call upon the mystic Shaikhs of the area. First of all, he enlisted himself as a disciple of Shaikh Khwājā 'Ubaid, a spiritual successor to Maulānā Lutf Ullah. Aspiring to attain the highest reaches of divine truth, he took Shaikh Iftikhār and then Amīr 'Abdullāh of Balakh as his spiritual guides but was not satisfied till he was drawn in a mysterious manner to Khwājā Bahā'ud-dīn Naqshband, who created in him an inclination to follow the path of mysticism requiring strict observance of the holy law. After some time he came to Kashmir and met Shaikh Bābā Kubrawī in whose company he acquired excellence and perfection of spirit. It is reported that during this period of his complete absorption in God, the unveiling of an stage that the mystics call *fanā* or extinction was experienced by him. Khwāja Baqī Billāh again took to scouring the country for another spiritual mentor after the death of Shaikh Bābā Kubrawī. During his travels he had a vision of Khwājā 'Ubaid Ullah Ahrār from whom he learnt the secrets of the Naqshbandiyah order. Thereafter Khwājā Baqī Billāh took the road to the region of Transoxania where he was granted leave by Shaikh Muhammad Amkankī to practice the Naqshbandiyah discipline and also to enlist disciples in that order only after three days' stay with him. Khwājā Bāqī Billāh returned to India, stayed for a year at Lahore where he met the scholars of the town, then he came down to Delhi and took up residence in the fort of Fīroz Shāh. The fort had, in those days, a spacious mosque and a wide canal running besides it. Khwāja Bāqī Billāh continued to live at this place until the end of his life's journey.

Being inflamed with the love of God, Khwājā Bāqī Billāh often gave way to transports of ecstatic raptures but he always tried to conceal his spiritual excellence from others owing to his temperamental modesty. If any one asked him to act as

his spiritual guide, he normally advised him to seek someone else perfect in spirit since he was himself devoid of it, and also to let him know about that attracted soul. Even if he agreed to guide anyone on the path of spiritual perfection he did so quietly without letting the novice know about it. On occasions when he had to explain an abstruse point, he gave a most eloquent dissertation on it. He insisted on his friends not to stand up in his honour, always treated them as his equals and often seated himself with others on the ground out of courteous humility.

The Khwājā had been endowed with a mysterious spirituality. On whomsoever he cast a momentary look, the man felt himself attracted to God. He had a tender heart which melted at the slightest sight of misery to a sentient being. Once in a wintery night he left his bed for a short while and found on return a cat sleeping under his quilt. Instead of making the cat leave his bed, he remained sitting for the whole night. Similarly, once he happend to be present in Lahore during a period of drought. He could hardly eat anything during that period and distributed whatever victuals were brought to him among the poor. Once on his return journey from Lahore to Delhi, he got down from his horse on coming across a handicapped man who was not able to walk. The Khwājā got him seated on his horse and took him to his destination before resuming his journey. At the same time, he put a cloth across his face so that nobody could recognise him. He never hesitated in owning his mistake nor ever pretended to be superior to anyone whether he was a friend or a stranger.

It is related that one of his neighbours, a young man, was a malefactor but the Khwājā always bore patiently with him. After some time Khwājā Hosām-ud-din, one of the Khwājā's disciples, lodged a complaint against that rascal with the authorities and he was put behind the bars. When Khwājā Bāqī Billāh came to know of the incident, he chided Khwājā Hosām-ud-din who submitted, "Sire, he is a wicked trouble-maker." The

Khwājā replied with a sigh, "Why not, you are all virtuous fellows who perceived this vileness but I do not find myself better than him. That is why I never lodged any complaint against him." Thereafter the Khwājā used his good offices to get the man released from gaol who repented of his sins and left his evil ways.

If one of the Khwājā's disciples committed a mistake, he always attributed it to himself saying that it was really his weakness which found an expression through his disciple.

In matters relating to worship of God and the dealings with his fellow-beings, the Khwājā used to exercise every possible precaution. It is related that he was accustomed to recite the *sūrah Fātiha* during the congregational prayers, since there were several *ahādīth* enjoining its recital even behind the Imām, until he was convinced that it was not necessary.

These instances present just a glimpse of the Khwājā's sterling virtues since his greatness can really be measured from the number of persons who got spiritual enlightenment through him within the extremely short period of his stay in India. The Naqshbandiyah order was propagated and made popular by him in this country. There were hardly few persons in India who knew anything about it prior to him.[1]

Shaikh Muhammad b. Fazl Ullah of Burhānpūr says that the Khwājā was incomparable in the effectiveness of his exhortations and sermons inasmuch as he succeeded in spreading his mystical order within a short period of three or four years

1. The Naqshbandiyah order reached India through two mystics. One of these was Amir Abul 'Alā of Akbarābād, nephew and spiritual successor of Abdullah Ahrārī, who had permission of his uncle to take disciples, but his method combined the disciplines of the Naqshbandiyah and Chishtiyah orders. Its centres were Kālpi, Mārehra, Dānāpūr and a few other places. The second mystic was Khwājā Bāqī Billāh. From India it spread to other countries of the Muslim world through the efforts of his disciples. (Maulana 'Abdul Ha'i, *As-Thaqāfāt-ul-Islāmiyah-fil Hind.)*

throughout the length and breadth of the land. Mullā Hāshim Kashmī writes in the *Zubdatul Muqāmāt* that the Khwājā died at an early age of forty years. He remained in India only for four years but he guided, within this short period, his friends and disciples to the acme of spiritual perfection who made the Naqshbandiyah order so popular that it overcame all other mystical orders prevalent in the country.

Muhammad b. Fazl Ullah Muhibbī writes in the *Khulāsatul-Āthār* that the Shaikh was a sign and a light and a prince of the knowers of God, endowed with both inward and outward perfection and a worker of miracles.[1] He was so unassuming and courteous that he never tried to take precedence over others. He even forbade his colleagues to stand up in deference to him and asked them to treat him as one of their equals.

Muhibbī further says that the Khwājā was a worker of miracles and wonders. Even if someone was disinterested in the ways of the spirit, no sooner did the Khwaja lay his eyes upon him than he felt irresistibly attracted towards him and entered in his fold of discipleship. Very often persons distracted with the grief of a longing after God seated themselves at his door. Many among his disciples were blessed with the vision of divine truths, in a mysterious way, soon after pledging spiritual allegiance to him.

Khwājā Bāqi Billāh's disciples included such illustrious men of God as the Mujaddid, Shaikh Tāj-ud-dīn b. Sultān Uthmāni of Sambhal, Shaikh Hosām-ud-din b. Shaikh Nizām-ud-dīn of Badakhshān and Shaikh Allādād of Delhi.

His writings consist of several tracts on mysticism, letters and poetic compositions. In the *Silsilatul Ahrār* he has given

1. *M'ujiza* is the miracle worked by a prophet of God while the miraculous acts of the saints and illuminated souls are known as *karāmāt and tasarrufāt*. Both are worked by the leave of God but the latter have a place definitely inferior to that brought about by the apostles of God. In English there are, however, no words to express the difference between the two.

an exposition of his mystical quatrains.

The Khwājā died on 14th Jamāda-ul-Ākhir, 1014 A.H.[1] at the age of forty years and four months and was buried at Qadam Rasūl in western Delhi where his grave is still visited by people in large numbers.

Mujaddid's initiation in the Khwaja's order

The Mujaddid was received warmly by Khwājā Bāqī Billāh when the former called upon him for initiation in his spiritual order. Ordinarily the Khwājā never showed any interest in enrolling novices for spiritual training but his treatment of the Mujaddid suggested as if he had been awaiting his arrival. Of a fact, the Mujaddid was to become the chief propounder of the Khwājā's spiritual order in India and to renovate the spiritual climate then obtaining in the country by bringing the then liberal mystic thoughts and practices within the orthodox confines of the *sharī'ah*. Thus, deviating from his usual practice, the Khwājā asked the Mujaddid to extend his stay with him for a month or so as his guest.

When the Khwājā was thinking of coming to India a parrot is stated to have perched on his hand. When the Khwājā narrated the incident to his spiritual mentor Khwājā Amkankī, he replied that parrot being an Indian bird the Khwājā would guide some one in India on the path of spirit who would illuminate the entire world.[2]

The Mujaddid accepted the invitation of Khwājā Baqī Billāh and prolonged his stay with the latter to one and a half months. He was so impressed by the Khwājā that he expressed the desire to be enrolled as a disciple for undergoing the Naqshbandiyah discipline. The Khwājā, after enrolling the Mujaddid in his spiritual order, advised him to practise the silent remembrance. The Mujaddid covered the path of spirit

1. 17th October, 1605 A.D.
2. *Zubdatul Muqāmāt*, pp. 140-141

with vigorous strides and acquired knowledge of esoteric secrets of the order so quickly that the Khwājā was led to believe that the Mujaddid answered the providential sign of Indian parrot who would renovate and revive the faith in India. Thus, within the short period of his stay with Khwājā Bāqī Billāh, the Mujaddid acquired perfection in outward and inward knowledge and was rewarded with a speedy ascent from one stage to another in the realm of spirit difficult to be expressed in words.[1]

The Mujaddid then returned to Sirhind but only when he was assured by Khwājā Bāqī Billāh that he had fully imbibed the Naqshbandiyah doctrine. The Khwājā also expressed the hope that the Mujaddid would make steady progress in attaining the proximity of divine essence. On his second visit to Delhi the Mujaddid obtained from his spiritual guide permission to impart instruction and to perfect disciples in the Naqshbandiyah order. The Khwājā also gave him permission to impart spiritual training to a few of his own disciples.

After some time the Mujaddid paid the third and the last visit to Khwājā Bāqī Billāh. The Khwājā came out of his house to receive him, gave him certain happy tidings and accorded him the honour of acting as the chief guide at a meeting of mystics engaged in devotions. The Khwājā also instructed his disciples that they ought to direct their attentions to the Mujaddid for spiritual guidance. Before bidding farewell to the Mujaddid, the Khwājā said, "I feel too weak now and do not expect to live for long." The Khwājā also asked the Mujaddid to apply his mind upon the spiritual training of his two sons, Khwājā 'Ubaid Ullah and Khwājā 'Abd Ullah, who were still young, and also to meditate in a similar manner for the well being of his wives in absentia. It is reported that the

1. Any one desirous to pursue the matter should go through the Mujaddid's letter No. 296 (Vol. I, Section IV) to Khwājā 'Ubaid Ullāh and Khwājā 'Abd Ullah, the sons of Khwājā Bāqī Billāh, and letter No. 290 (Vol. I, Section V) to Maulānā Muhammad Hāshim Kashmī.

Mujaddid's meditation was instantly rewarded with fruitful results.[1]

The Khwājā later on wrote in a letter to one of his friends, "Shaikh Ahmad who belongs to Sirhind is a man of great learning and piety. He has lived for a few days with this mendicant who has witnessed his wonderful qualities and attainments. I hope that he would one day illuminate the whole world. I am fully convinced of his spiritual perfection."

The Mujaddid, on his part, felt assured from the day he had been led on the path of spirit by his mentor that he would one day attain the highest stage of the discipline. At the same time, he had no doubt that all his attainments were attributable to his guide. He often used to recite the verses which said :—

The light I am getting from your heart on mine,
Assures me that my spirit will unite with thine.

Neither learning nor spiritual attainment of the Mujaddid ever stood in the way of his showing greatest honour to the Khwājā. If Khwājā Bāqī Billah ever sent for him, the complexion of his face would turn pale and he would appear visibly agitated.[2] The Khwājā, on the other hand, always spoke so highly of the Mujaddid as few spiritual guides have seldom commended their disciples. Once, it is reported, he remarked about the Mujaddid: "Shaikh Ahmad is the sun whose brilliance steals the light of innumerable stars like us."[3]

1. *Zubdatul Muqāmāt*, p. 155.
2. *Ibid.*, p. 149
3. *Ibid.*, p. 330

CHAPTER V

MUJADDID AS A SPIRITUAL GUIDE

Stay at Sirhind

After completing the probationary period with Khwājā Bāqī Billāh, the Mujaddid withdrew to the seclusion of his house in Sirhind subjecting himself to the severe discipline of spiritual exercises. For a long time he kept his doors closed to all those who came to seek his spiritual guidance. He felt reluctant to act as their spiritual mentor since he was himself making a rapid progress on the path of inward perfection which did not allow him to divert his attention to the guidance and training of others. A recession (*nuzūl*) from transports of religious ecstasy was needed for imparting training to others and hence he hardly felt inclined to it. In a letter written during this period, he remarked : "I was conscious of this shortcoming and so I called for all the students and disciples to tell them about my diffidence in this regard, but they took it as my humility and continued to pin their faith in me until the Gracious God settled me in the (*ahwāl-i-muntazirah*) state of expectancy."[1]

1. *Maktūbāt*, Vol. I, No. 290.

The Mujaddid began, at last, accepting disciples in his order and guiding them on the path of spiritual illumination. He used to keep the Khwājā informed of his own spiritual experiences as well as the states and stages attained by his disciples. His writings of the period show that his progress on the path of inward perfection was leading him to the fulfilment of divine will, that is, accomplishment of those immensely important tasks which were to prove beneficial to the faith.[1] The Mujaddid was only once to meet his spiritual mentor during this period after which he had no opportunity to see him again.

Journey to Lahore

The Mujaddid undertook the journey to Lahore, at the instance of the Khwājā, after a brief stay at Sirhind. Lahore was then the *second largest intellectual and religious centre of India* because of the large number of scholars and men of God living in that city. The Mujaddid was warmly received by the divines and scholars of Lahore,[2] some of whom even entered the fold of his spiritual order.[3] Maulānā Tāhir was one of those who bound themselves to the Mujaddid's spiritual allegiance and later rose to become his chief successor. Other notable persons enlisting themselves as the Mujaddid's disciples were Maulānā Hājī Muhammad and Maulānā Jamāl-ud-din Talwī. We find Mujaddid and his friends at Lahore having frequent seances for meditation or recital of God's praises.

The news about Khwājā Bāqī Billāh's death was received by Mujaddid while he was still in Lahore. Extremely agitated

1. *Maktūbāt*, Vol. II, No. 74
2. *Zubdatul Muqāmāt*, p. 157
3. *Ibid.*, p. 158. *Rauzatul Qayyūmiah* mentions the names of a few other persons like Khān Khānān and Murtaza Khān (also known as Saiyid Farīd) who took oath of allegiance to the Mujaddid while he was on his way to Lahore.

and disturbed, he set out for Delhi immediately. He went straight to Delhi, bypassing Sirhind, and paid a visit to his mentor's grave. The Mujaddid prolonged his stay at Delhi to console the bereaved members of the Khwājā's family which also helped to infuse a new spirit in the late Khwājā's disciples.[1]

The Mujaddid then returned to Sirhind. Thereafter he had an occasion to visit Delhi only once and made two or three trips to Agra. Then, during the last few years of his life he happened to pass through a few more cities with the troops escorting the Emperor. Wherever the Khwājā went, people seeking spiritual guidance flocked round him to derive benefit from his company.[2]

Arrangements for Moral Regeneration

The Mujaddid despatched several of his spiritual successors in 1026/1617 to different cities for moral and spiritual uplift of the people. A batch of 70 persons headed by Maulānā Muhammad Qāsim was sent to Turkistān; Maulānā Farrukh Husain with forty persons was deputed to Arabia, Yemen, Syria and Turkey; ten of his disciples under the leadership of Maulānā Muhammad Sādiq of Kābul were sent on a spiritual mission towards Kāshghar; and Maulānā Shaikh Ahmad Barkī along with 30 disciples were commissioned to preach his message in Turān, Badakhshān and Khurāsān. All these deputies of the Mujaddid carried out their mission successfully and brought about moral uplift of innumerable people.[3]

The result of these reformative endeavours was that several divines and scholars of mark and distinction came from far-flung areas to Sirhind in order to seek guidance from the Mujaddid. These distinguished men included Shaikh Tāhir of Badakhshān, a close confidant and courtier of the king of Badakhshān, and

1. *Zubdatul-Muqāmāt*, p. 158
2. *Ibid.*, p. 159
3. *Rauzatul Qayyūmiyah*, pp. 166-67

the reputed scholars like Shaikh 'Abdul Haq of Shādmān, Maulānā Sālih Kolābī, Shaikh Ahmad Barsī, Maulānā Yār Mohammad and Maulānā Yūsuf. Most of the scholars and divines coming from afar were allowed to enter the fold of Mujaddid's spiritual paternity, led to the path of spiritual perfection and then sent back to the places whence they had come for reformation and moral regeneration of the local population.[1]

The Mujaddid also deputed a number of his disciples for spreading his message of reform to different parts of the country. Mīr Muhammad N'omān, whom the Mujaddid had given permission to impart religious instruction and to perfect disciples as his deputy; was sent to Deccan. His cloister was daily visited by hundreds of troops, both infantrymen and cavalry, for meditation and the service of *zikr*. Shaikh Bad'i-ud-dīn of Sahāranpūr, another deputy of the Mujaddid, was first sent to Sahāranpūr and then commissioned to preach in Agra's military station. He attained such a popularity that thousands of men enlisted in the Imperial army including higher officers entered in his fold of spiritual tutelage. Such a throng of common people used to surround him that the nobles found it difficult to gain access to him. Another disciple of the Mujaddid, Mīr Muhammad N'omān Kashmī, who had obtaind permission to impart spiritual guidance from Khwājā Bāqī Billāh, was deputed to Burhānpūr. His sterling piety won the admiration of the local populace and led them to reform their lives and morals. Shaikh Tāhir of Lahore and Shaikh Nūr Muhammad of Patna were sent to their home towns where they guided a large number of men on the path of virtue and piety. Shaikh Hāmid was deputed to Bengal after he had attained inward perfection of spirit. Shaikh Tāhir of Badakhshān was asked to go to Jaunpūr for guidance of the people there. Maulānā Ahmad Barkī was deputed to Bark who also kept the Mujaddid informed about

1. *Rauzatul Qayyūmiah*, pp. 128-29 and *Hazarātul Quds*, pp. 299-368

the spiritual progress of his disciples. Shaikh 'Abdul Ha'ī, who belonged to Hisār Shādmān in Asphahān and had compiled the second volume of the *Maktūbāt*, was sent to Patna. He founded a cloister in the heart of the city for the guidance of the populace while Shaikh Nūr Muhammad took up his residence by the side of river Ganges in Patna to spread the message of religious reform and renovation. Another man sent to his own home town was Shaikh Hasan of Bark. Saiyid Muhib Ullah of Mānikpūr was invested with the mantle of successorship and then directed to carry on the reformatory work in his town. Later on he obtained the permission of the Mujaddid to move on to Allāhābād. Shaikh Karīm-ud-dīn Bābā Hasan Abdālī was also guided to attain spiritual perfection and allowed to return to his home for imparting the message of divine proximity to the people.[1] Thus, before the year 1027/1618 drew to a close, the name and fame of the Mujaddid had reached the lands far off from India and people had started coming from different countries for undergoing mystical discipline under him. Mujaddid's deputies had already established themselves in Transoxania, Badakhshān, Kābul and several other cities and towns and his message had reached even the Arab countries. There was hardly a town in India where his deputies or spiritual successors were not inviting people to the straight path of Islam and virtuous mode of life.

Attitude of Jahāngīr

Nūr-ud-dīn Jahāngīr ascended the throne on the death of Akbar in 1014/1605. The manner in which Islam was systematically discouraged, insulted and persecuted during the reign of Akbar in a country which had not only been won by Muslim warriors but was also adorned by deephearted men of God was too painful to trouble the heart of the Mujaddid but that was the time when he was engaged in the quest for his own spiritual embellishment. The Mujaddid had not been able to launch

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1. *Hazarātul-Quds*

his reformatory movement partly on account of his engagement in his own spiritual training and partly because he had not been able to evolve the method by which he could make an impact on the administration of the country and force it to change its policies in regard to Islam and the Muslims. We do not possess much details about the Mujaddid's endeavours during this period except that he wrote a few letters tendering advice to the King through Khān Khānān, Saiyid Sadr Jahān, Murtazā Khān and other nobles of the Imperial court. All these persons were close to the Emperor and had also been attached to the Mujaddid.

Jahāngīr was not inimical to Islam. Rather, he possessed liberal views on religious matters and respected the faith of his forefathers. He was not interested either in enforcing a new religion or a novel system of administration. As a man of generous instincts, he was fond of sports, arts and good living.

Mujaddid, however, considered Jahāngīr's reign as favourable for taking steps to eradicate the pernicious trends of the earlier regime which would be described latter on. But before he could fully begin his reformatory endeavours, he was put behind the bars in the Gwālior fort which had a great impact on his subsequent efforts and could, thus, be treated as a landmark in the history of his reformatory movement. Certain biographers and historians hold that a few of the Mujaddid's letters dealing with intricate stages of a mystic's journey on the path of spirit[1] were presented to Jahāngīr by interested persons to show that he was making extravagant claims

1. *See* letter No. 11 in Part I of the *Maktūbāt* addressed to Khwājā Bāqī Billāh.

Apart from Jahāngīr who was not conversant with the terminology of the mystics employed to express the different states and stages of the journey of spirit, certain other persons, too, whose depth of knowledge and mystical experiences are acknowledged by all, took exception to certain expressions of Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindī. Shaikh 'Abdul

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which ran counter to the accepted tenets of Islam. Jahāngīr expressed surprise at these writings and mistook them as arrogance and conceitedness of the Shaikh. The reference to the Shaikh in the Memoirs of Jahāngīr is indicative of his surprise as well as contempt for the esoteric utterances contained in the *Maktubāt*.[1] Jahāngīr's remarks show that he was not conversant with the esoteric realities and like a Turānian Mughāl Amīr considering himself as the guardian of Muslims and their faith, he condemned the ideas running counter to the common beliefs of the Muslims according to his own understanding.

Shaikh Badī-ud-din had gained popularity among the royal troops and was held in esteem by a large number of grandees. This was also represented as a conspiracy engineered by Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindī to get a foothold in the royal army for instigating rebellion. Shaikh Badī-ud-dīn was also guilty of indiscretion. Forgetting the rule of commonsense to speak before the commonality in accordance with their understanding, he had given expession to certain esoteric realities which

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Haq Muhaddith Dehlawī, a well known scholar of *hadīth*, whose perfection of spirit cannot be questioned, expressed grave doubts about Sirhindi's views expressed in the above mentioned letter. He also corresponded with Sirhindi to get a clarification on the subject. Ultimately Shaikh 'Abdul Haq was satisfied with the replies given by Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindi, which was also later on acknowledged by him in one of his letters. The Shaikh's son Nūr-ul-Haq writes, "It has now been confirmed that one of the Shaikh's (Mujaddid) disciples, Hasan Khān by name, who was a Pathān, parted company with the Shaikh because of a certain matter. He made some interpolations in the copy of *Maktūbāt* he had got and sent its copies to different persons in order to defame the Shaikh (*Manāqib-ul-'Arifīn* by Shāh Fath Muhammad Fatehpūrī Chistī, p. 126). These very letters might have been a cause of Jahāngīr's anger against Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindi.

1. *Tūzuk Jahāngīrī*, Vol. II, pp. 92-93.

were likely to create misunderstanding[1] about him and Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindī. As already stated Jahāngīr was not conversant with the mystical disciplines. He had also certain grandees among his courtiers who were inimical to the Shaikh for the latter was also trying to counteract the Shī'ite influence. Consisting of the Iranian scholars and nobles, the Shī'ite element then held a predominant position in the court and Muslim society of the time. On the other hand, Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindī had been preaching the Sunnī creed and vigorously denouncing the Shī'ite beliefs. It would have, therefore, been not at all unreasonable if the Iranian nobles had taken advantage of the situation by representing the Shaikh's endeavours as politically motivated and instigated Jahāngīr to take action against him.

This was the time when the Mujaddid's popularity was at its climax and he was one of the most highly respected scholars and mystics of the time. Perhaps God intended him to face this trial and tribulation during the very acme and pitch of his popularity so as to endow him with an inward perfection of spirit that cannot be had without wearing the crown of thorns.

Reasons of Detention at Gwālior Fort

The reason behind Mujaddid's imprisonment normally given in historical and biographical writings is the letter written by him in which he describes the experiences of his spiritual strides and attainment of a spiritual eminence greater than the early precursors of faith.

It is, however, difficult to establish satisfactorily the reason behind Mujaddid's detention at Gwālior from the source material available now. It is doubtful if the Mujaddid was put behind the bars simply on account of these ecstatic expressions which could not be given the dress of words save in a metaphorical language by taking recourse to intricate mystical imagery

1. *Zubdatul-Muqāmāt*, p. 348;

and spiritual allegory. Was it simply this misunderstanding on the part of Jahāngīr or his zeal to defend the accepted beliefs of the *ahl-Sunnat wal-Jamā'at* or was it brought about on the insistence of religious scholars and spiritual leaders of the time? It is difficult to answer these questions but there can be no doubt about the fact that Jahāngīr was not a man of such deeper religious susceptibilities that he should have imprisoned a well known and highly respected religious figure simply on account of something which he would have even found difficult to understand.

Shaikh Muhammad Ghauth of Gwālior had, during the life-time of Jahāngīr's father and grandfather, made the arrogant claim of ascension which had caused considerable agitation among the scholars of the time.[1] A number of *fatāwā*[2] against him were issued by the scholars but neither Humāyūn nor Abkar took any action against him. In fact, certain other mystics of Jahāngīr's time had, in their expositions of the doctrine of Unity of Being, gone to the extent of asserting 'vision' and claiming 'equality' with God. Shaikh Muhīb Ullah of Allāhābād, a contemporary of Jahāngīr, wrote the *Al-Taswiyah* in Arabic and then its commentary in Persian in which he made mystical claims of an even more extravagant nature but no notice of his writings was taken by Jahāngīr. The reason given in Jahāngīr's Memoirs becomes all the more dubious when we consider the fact that the letter in question was written by the Mujaddid to Khwājā Bāqī Billāh in 1012/1603 while he was imprisoned sixteen years later in 1028/1619, that is, the fourteenth year of Jahāngīr's reign. Why did Jahāngīr kept quiet during all this period if he considered Shaikh Ahmad's writings to be so objectionable? It also does not stand to reason that Jahāngīr remained unaware

1. For details see *Shāh Muhammad Ghauth Gwāliori* by Prof. Muhammad Mas'ūd.
2. Juristic opinions of the scholars in accordance with the accepted norms of *sharī'āh*.

of Shaikh Ahmad's letter for such a long period for he himself says that Shaikh Ahmad had attained considerable popularity. The possibility of the reason supposed to have been given by Jahāngīr being a subsequent interpolation in the Memoirs can also not be ruled out since there are several versions which profess to be the autobiographical Memoirs of Jahāngīr and all of them contain passages not found in another copy. Jahāngīr is reported to have himself written his memoirs upto a certain time and then appointed M'utamad Khān to continue to work. Another courtier, Mirza Muhammd Hādī, is reported to have written the preface and certain other parts of the Memoirs. Historians are of the view that Jahāngīr kept two or more memoir-writers to whom he gave directions as to the events they were to record on his behalf. There are also reasons to believe that the original work was edited after his death. Keeping all these facts in view it becomes highly improbable that the Mujaddid was imprisoned for writing something sixteen years back which was hardly of any interest to Jahāngīr.

The reason, it seems, was that Shaikh Ahmad had established close contacts with the dignitaries of Jahāngīr's court, and some of them held him in reverence. For an Emperor who had raised the banner of revolt against his father and won the throne after a tussle with his brothers, the influence wielded by Shaikh Ahmad was sufficient to create misgivings against him. In all probability Jahāngīr had come to know of the letters Shaikh Ahmad had been writing to this grandees for changing the existing state of affairs and bringing the government to the defence of Islam. This should have been a sufficient reason for creating misgivings against him in the mind of the Emperor.

These dignitaries of the royal court were, among others, such influential courtiers as Mirzā 'Azīz-ud-dīn, Khān Jahān Khān Lodhī, Khān Khānān Mirzā 'Abdur Rahīm, Mirzā Darāb and Qaleej Khān.

Moghul Emperors never looked with favour the popularity

of the sufi saints among the masses. Almost the same episode was repeated when one of the disciples of Mujaddid, Saiyid Ādam Binnaurī, earned the popular esteem of the people. In 1052/1642, when he went to Lahore accompanied by ten thousand persons, several of whom were scholars and respected sufi saints, Emperor Shāhjahān happened to be present in that city. He immediately felt the danger from Saiyid Ādam Binnaurī's popularity and created conditions which made the Shaikh leave India for Mecca. This also explains why Jahāngīr required the Mujaddid, after releasing him from Gwālior Fort, to remain with his Army so that he could find out the nature of his relationship with his dignitaries and make sure that he would not be a danger to his rule.[1] He allowed the Mujaddid to go to Sirhind only after he was convinced that the Mujaddid had no political intentions. The Mujaddid's sincerity, godliness and selflessness as well as his disinterestedness in the things worldly ultimately set at rest the doubts of the Emperor that any contender for his throne could exploit the Shaikh's popularity for his own ends.

Internment in the Gwālior Fort

Jahāngīr summoned the Mujaddid and simultaneously ordered the governor of Sirhind to make arrangements for Shaikh's journey to Āgra. The Mujaddid set forth with five of his disciples and was received by the protocol officials at the capital. He was lodged in a tent near the royal palace and then allowed to appear before the Emperor. He refused to perform the ceremonial etiquette consisting of complimentary

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1. This appears to be most credible reason for Jahāngīr states in the *Memoirs* that the Mujaddid had "sent into every city and country one of his disciples, whom he calls his deputy" and that he imprisoned the Mujaddid so that "the excitement of the people should also subside." (*Memoirs of Jahāngīr*. Tr. Alexander Rogers, Vol. II, pp. 92-93)

prostration deemed un-Islamic by him. One of the courtiers of Jahāngīr invited the Emperor's attention to the failure of the Mujaddid and thereupon Jahāngīr asked the Mujaddid to explain his conduct. The Mujaddid replied that he did not know of any etiquette save that prescribed by God and the Prophet. Jahāngīr got annoyed and asked the Mujaddid to perform the prostration.[1] The Mujaddid refused again saying that he would not prostrate before anyone except God. Jahāngīr was further irritated and he ordered that the Mujaddid should be imprisoned in the Gwālior Fort.[2]

Shāhjahān had sent a message, just before this episode, through Afzal Khān and Khwāja Abdur Rahmān Muftī that complimentary prostration before the kings with the intention of showing honour to them was permissible in such circumstances. Therefore, should Mujaddid agree to do so on his visit to the Emperor, he would see that no harm was done to him. To this the Mujaddid had replied that it was simply a leave granted for saving oneself from an impending harm but the better course was to refuse prostration before anyone save God.[3]

This sad incident came to pass on a certain date during Rabī ul-Thānī, 1028/March, 1619 as the event is mentioned in the *Memoirs* along with other happenings of the time. After the imprisonment of the Mujaddid, his house, cloister, well, grove and the books were all confiscated and his dependants were transferred to another place.[4]

In the Gaol

The internment in Gwālior Fort proved a blessing for the

1. Prostration before the Emperor was prescribed by Akbar which was finally abolished by Aurangzīb.
2. *Hazarātul Quds*, p. 117
3. *Ibid.*, p. 116
4. *Maktūbāt*, Vol. III, letter No. 2

Mujaddid in the shape of increased popularity and greater spiritual attainments. Following the practice of Prophet Yūsuf, Shaikh Ahmad started preaching the message of true faith to other fellow convicts. Like the Prophet Yūsuf he raised the question, *Are divers lords better, or Allah the One, the Almighty?* with such persuation in the Gwālior Fort that several thousand non-Muslim convicts embraced Islam. There were hundreds of others who reformed their morals in his company; many raised themselves spiritually to the position of elects.

Dr. Arnold writes in the *Preaching of Islam :*

> "In the reign of Emperor Jahāngīr (1605-1628) there was a certain Sunnī Theologian, named Shaikh Ahmad Mujaddid, who especially distinguished himself by the energy with which he controverted the doctrines of the Shi'ahs: the latter, being at this time in favour at court, had succeeded in having him imprisoned on some frivolous charge; during the two years that he was kept in prison he converted to Islam several hundred idolaters who were his companions in the prison."[1]

Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics mentions the achievements of Shaikh Ahmad in these words :

> "In India, in the seventeenth century, a theologion, named Shaikh Ahmad Mujaddid, who had been unjustly imprisoned, is said to have converted several hundred idolaters whom he found in the prison."[2]

Religious Ecstasy during Interment

Shaikh Ahmad seems to have had no cause of regretting his imprisonment for he experinced ecstatic transports and spiritual enlightenment during that period. These were also communicated by him to his disciples through his letters. In one such letter

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1. T. W. Arnold, *The Preaching of Islam* (London, 1935), p. 412
2. *Encylopedia af Religions and Ethics*, Vol. VIII, p. 748

written to Mīr Muhammad N'umān, sent by him from the Gwālior Fort, he says:

> "Had the divine grace not come to my aid with constant flow of ecstatic transports and spiritual rewards, this weakling might have been pushed to the verge of despair and lost all hope. Praise be to God who blessed me with a sense of security in the midst of calamity; gave me honour through persecution; helped me to endure the hardships and to offer my thanks to Him; and included me in the ranks of those who follow in the footsteps of the prophets and love the pious and the elects. May God shower His blessings on His messengers and those who follow them."[1]

It seems that the imprisonment of Shaikh Ahmad was utilised by certain persons to defame him which hurt the feelings of his disciples. Referring to such reflections he wrote to Shaikh Badī-ud-dīn :—

> "From the day this mendicant has arrived in this Fort, he has been having intuitive apprehensions of public dispargement heading towards him like radiant clouds from the cities and villages, which have helped him to attain higher regions of spiritual excellence. For years I had been imparted instruction through manifestation of God's beauty *(jamāl)* but now I am attaining these stages through the manifestation of His awe *(jalāl)*. You ought, therefore, to keep yourself at the stage of patience *(sabr)* and resignation *(ridha)* and regard the beauty *(jamāl)* and awe *(jalāl)* as identical."[2]

The Mujaddid also wrote letters from the Fort to his sons. In these he advised them to be patient and thankful to God. He bade them to pay attention to their studies and, at the same time, spend their time in God's remembrance and denial of all

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1. *Maktūbāt*, Vol. III, letter No. 5
2. *Ibid.*, letter No. 6

powers save that of God.[1]

A few hagiographical writings contain the report that the Mujaddid's imprisonment created discontent among the religious minded courtiers which gave rise even to a few sporadic insurrections.[2] It is also claimed that the dignitaries like 'Abdur Rahīm Khān Khānān, Khān 'Āzam, Saiyid Sadr Jahān, Khān Jahān Lodī were displeased by the action taken by Jahāngīr. However, there is no evidence left by the contemporary historians to confirm these reports, nor, the connection between the insurrectionary events of the period and Shaikh Ahmad's imprisonment can be established by any sound historical method.

However, Jahāngīr felt remorse[3] after some time or he considered the period of imprisonment undergone by Shaikh Ahmad to be sufficient for the disrespect shown by him. Whatever may have been the reason, Jahāngīr ordered the Shaikh to be released after one year's imprisonment in Jamada-ul-Ākhir 1029/May, 1620. He also expressed the wish to meet Shaikh Ahmad again after his release from the prison.

Stay at the Royal Camp

The Mujaddid was honourably released from the prison from where he went to Sirhind. After three days stay at his home town he left for Āgra. He was received by the Crown Prince Khurram and the Prime Minister and conveyed the Emperor's desire that the Shaikh should take up residence with the royal army for some time. Shaikh Ahmad gave his consent to the proposal. His stay at the royal camp was of great

1. *Maktūbāt*, Vol. III, letter No. 2. *See* letters to Khwaja Muhammad M'asūm and Khwājā Muhammad Sa'eed.
2. Revolt by Mahābat Khān has been cited as an example in this connection but this is not correct because Mahābat Khān rebelled in 1035/1626, four or five years after the release of Shaikh Ahmad from Gwālior Fort.
3. It is reported that Jahāngīr saw the holy Prophet in a vision who expressed his displeasure at the imprisonment of Shaikh Ahmad.

benefit both to the king and the army personnel. However, Jahāngīr writes in his Memoirs that he released the Shaikh, gave him a dress of honour and Rs. 1,000 as expenses. He also says that he gave him the choice to go back or to remain with him but the Shaikh preferred to wait on him.[1]

On the other hand, the Mujaddid has described his stay at the royal camp in one of his letters to his sons. He wrote that he considered even a short stay at the camp, without deriving any material benefit from the king, to be better than spending a longer time elsewhere.[2]

In another letter he wrote:

> "Praise be to God and peace to His bondman, the holy Prophet. The conditions and the way things are shaping here evoke my praise and thanks to God. I am having a good company here, and by the grace of God, in none of my talks to these persons I have to make the least compromise in explaining the essentials of faith to them.
>
> The discussions in the meetings here pertain to the same issues which are touched upon in our private and special discourses but a whole tract would be required to describe them in detail."[3]

Shaikh Ahmad has also mentioned his meeting with the Emperor in one of his letters. He writes:

> "I have received the letter from my sons. Thanks God that I am quite well. I now refer to an event that happened today. It is Saturday night today when I went to have a private sitting with the Emperor and came back after three hours.[4] Thereafter I listened three *parās* of the

1. *Tūzuk-i-Jahāngīrī*, Vol. II, p. 161
2. *Maktūbāt*, Vol. III, letter No. 43
3. *Ibid.*, letter No. 106
4. Shaikh Ahmad has used the word *pahr* which means one-fourth of a night or day.

Qur'ān recited by a *hāfiz* and went to sleep after the dead of night."[1]

In yet another letter to Khwājā Hosām-ud-dīn he wrote:

"My sons and friends who are these days here with me are making progress on the path of spirit. The royal camp has taken the shape of a mystic cloister because of their presence."[2]

The Mujaddid accompanied the royal camp when it proceeded to Lahore. From there the royal camp moved on to Sirhind where he entertained the royal guest at a sumptuous repast. Shaikh Ahmad wanted to stay at Sirhind but the Emperor expressed the wish that he should *not* part company with him. The royal camp then proceeded to Delhi and then to Āgra.

A few biographical accounts of Shaikh Ahmad Mujaddid Alf Thāni, compiled in recent times, present Jahāngīr as a disciple of the Shaikh on whose hands he had taken an oath of allegiance. There is, however, nothing to confirm this presumption by sound historical evidence. The description of Shaikh Ahmad's meeting with him, as given in the *Tūzuk-i-Jahāngīrī* does not support this view for no king, howsoever vainglorious and overweening would have described his spiritual mentor in that manner. Yohanan Friedmann has also expressed the view that there is little material to substantiate the thesis that Sirhindī succeeded in converting the Emperor to his particular view of Islam.[3] No primary source indicates that either Jahāngīr or Shāhjahān took oath of allegiance to the Mujaddid but it can also not be denied that Jahāngīr was impressed by him and became more sympathetic to Islam after coming in contact with him. He ordered reconstruction of demolished mosques and opening of religious schools in the newly conquered areas. The

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1. *Maktūbāt*, Vol. III, letter No. 78
2. *Maktūbāt*, Vol. III, letter No. 72
3. *Shaykh Ahmad Sirhindi*, p. 85

action taken by Jahāngīr on the occasion of his visit to Kāngrā following its conquest in 1031/1621 is an unmistakable indication of the change in his attitude towards Islam.[1]

The End of Journey

Khwājā Muhammad Kashmī writes that the Mujaddid was at Ajmer in 1032/1622 when he told his disciples that the day of his eternal rest was drawing near. In a letter to his sons, who were then at Sirhind, he wrote, "the journey's end is near but my sons are far away." His sons made haste to present themselves to their father at Ajmer. A few days after their arrival, the Shaikh said to them, "Now I have no interest in anything of this world, hereafter is uppermost in my thoughts and it seems that my journey's end is nigh."[2]

After his return from the royal camp Shaikh Ahmad stayed at Sirhind for ten months and eight or nine days.[3] It is related that on coming back from Ajmer to Sirhind he took to seclusion and nobody save his sons and two or three disciples[4] were permitted to call upon him. The Shaikh came out of his retirement only for the daily congregations or Friday prayers and spent the remaining time in recollection of God, repentance and devotions leading to inward perfection and beatification of spirit. During this period his life presented a complete picture of separation from everything for a journey

1. *Memoirs of Jahangīr*, Vol. II, p. 223
2. *Zubdatul Muqāmāt*, p. 282
3. Maulānā Abul Hasan Zaid, *Hazrat Mujaddid Aur Unke Nāqidīn*, pp. 164-65.
4. One of these disciples was Khwājā Muhammad Kashmī who had, however, gone to Deccan in Rajab 1033, about seven months before the death of Shaikh Ahmad, to bring his family back as insurrection had broken out there. Shaikh Badr-ud-dīn of Sirhind, another disciple of the Shaikh, remained in attendance of his mentor till his death. The description given here is based on his narrative in the *Zubdatul Muqāmāt* or the information given by the Shaikh's sons.

towards God through God.

By the middle of Zil Hijja Shaikh Ahmad's respiratory ailment took an acute form. Often he shed tears and repeated the words, "O Allah, the Exalted Companion." For a few days, during this period, he showed signs of improvement. To his kins and disciples who felt relieved by his signs of recovery, he often remarked, "The blissful elevation I experienced during my feebleness is wanting in this period of recovery." The Shaikh also gave out charities to the poor and needy with both hands during his period of illness. On the 12th of Muharram, he said, "I have been told that I will leave this world for the next within forty-five days. The location of my grave has also been shown to me." One day his sons found him sobbing and asked the reason for it. Shaikh Ahmad replied, "It is because of my eagerness to meet my Lord." When his sons further enquired why he was indifferent to them, the Shaikh said, "God is dearer than you."

The fortieth day after Shaikh Ahmad's forecast of death came up on the 22nd of Safar. All the relations and disciples were worried when the Shaikh pointed out, "It is the fortieth day of premonition to me. See what happens in the next seven or eight days." The Mujaddid appeared to the immersed in the sea of grace from God, singing of His praise and grace and blessings to him. On the 23rd Safar, he gave away all his wearing apparels to those attending him. With no warm robing on his person, Shaikh Ahmad caught cold and again developed fever.[1] This was, as if, to take after the beloved Prophet's *sunnah* who had a temporary recovery during his last illness.

Throughout his illness, Shaikh Ahmad continued to discourse upon the secrets of divine truths as though with a renewed vigour. When his son Khwājā Muhammad Sa'eed requested him

1. As Shaikh Ahmad died early in December, this should have been winter season.

to postpone his discourses till he had regained his health, Shaikh Ahmad replied, "My dear, where is the time to postpone these discourses?" Even when he had grown extremely weak he insisted on performing all the prescribed prayers with the congregation. Only for four or five days before his death he was prevailed upon by his attendants to perform these prayers alone, but he continued other supplications, recollections and contemplations in the usual manner. He also continued to follow other prescriptions of the *shari'ah* most punctiliously. During the last night of his earthly existence, he got up to perform ablution a few hours before dawn and stood on his prayer-mat to perform the *tahajjud*[1] prayer. Thereafter he remarked, "This is my last *tahajjud* prayer." And it really happened to be so, for he was not to have another opportunity of performing that particular orison.

A little while before the Shaikh left this fleeting world he had a brief spell of ecstatic transport. When asked about the nature of these entrances, he replied that these were trances of spiritual intoxication wherein secrets of recondite reality were being revealed to him. However, even during this period of his serious illness, when he had grown extremely weak, he continued to exhort his attendants to follow the example of the Prophet, to avoid all innovations and aberrations and to spend their time in the remembrance of God and contemplation. "You should be overscrupulous about every minute detail in following the Prophet's example; the Holy Prophet had left no stone unturned to clearly explain the path of virtue for the benefit of his followers; therefore, seek the knowledge about the Prophet's way from authoritative books and follow them with the greatest care," said Shaikh Ahmad and then added, "Follow the Prophet's example in performing my last rites." He also sent for his wife and said to her, "Since I am leaving this

1. A voluntary prayer performed a few hours before dawn.

world before you, meet my furneral expenses from your *mahr*.[1]" Shaikh Ahmad told his sons to lay him to rest at some unknown place. When his sons reminded him that he had earlier expressed the wish to be interned by the side of his eldest son Khwājā Muhammad Sādīq's[2] grave, he replied, "Yes, I had then wished it so, but now I desire it otherwise." However, finding his sons gloomy at his suggestion, the Shaikh added, "If you do not think it proper, bury me outside the city in some grove or beside my father's grave and let it be made of mud so that no trace of my grave remains after a short time." As the Shaikh's sons kept quiet at his instructions, he smiled and said, "I give you permission to bury me where you like."

The night before Tuesday falling on the 29th of Safar was the last night of the ailing Shaikh's earthly sojourn. To those who had attended him day and night throughout his illness, Shaikh Ahmad remarked, "All of you have laboured hard, now only a night's toil remains, and then you would be relieved." Towards the end of the night he said, "Let it be morning now." Early in morning, he asked to fetch a vessel for passing urine, but as it did not contain sand, he gave up the idea lest his clothes were soiled. Someone present at the time asked him to pass urine in a bottle which may be sent to the physician, but he replied, "I do not want my ablution to be nullified." The Shaikh then asked his attendants to make him lie on his bed as if he knew that the time of his departure had arrived and there was no time for performing another ablution. Lying down on his bed, he put his right hand below his cheek and occupied himself in the remembrance of God. Finding him breathing a bit fast, his sons enquired how was he feeling. Shaikh Ahmad replied that he was alright and then added that the two *rak'ats* of the prayer performed by him were enough.

1. Dower money.
2. He was the eldest son of Shaikh Ahmad who died on 9th Rabi I, 1025 A.H.

Thereafter he uttered nothing except the name of God and yielded his breath. This was Tuesday morning, the 29th of Safar, 1034 A.H.[1]

Shaikh Ahmad was in the 63rd year of his age when he bid farewell to the world.[2]

When the Shaikh's dead body was brought out for washing, his right hand was placed upon the left, below the navel, as if in the prayer. His hands were stretched out for washing but they were again found to have taken the previous position after the body had been washed. It appeared from the Shaikh's countenance as if he was smiling.

The funeral arrangements were made strictly according to the *sunnah*. His elder son Khwājā Muhammad Sa'eed presided over the funeral prayer and then the Shaikh's dead body was taken away for the eternal rest.[3]

Character and Daily Routine

Khwāja Muhammad Hāshim Kashmī had been a constant companion of the Mujaddid during last three years of his life. He has recorded in detail the daily routine and disposition of his spiritual mentor in the *Zubdatul Muqāmāt*. The account of Shaikh Ahmad's character given here has been taken largely from Kashmī's description with a few additions from Badr-ud-dīn Sirhindī's *Hazarātul Quds*.

Shaikh Ahmad was often heard saying, "Nothing can be obtained simply by our effort; whatever we have it was due to the grace of God. But the blessings of God, too, depend on taking after the custom of the holy Prophet, on whom be peace. This, in my opinion, is the source of all blessings.

1. 10th December, 1624.
2. According to Zaid Abul Hasan Shaikh Ahmad died at the age of sixty years, six months and five days according to the Solar calendar and sixty-two years four months and fourteen days according to the Lunar calendar. (*Hazrat Mujaddid Aur Unke Nāqidīn*, p. 22)
3. *Zubdatul Muqāmāt*, pp. 256-300.

Whatever God has given me, it was made available because of my following the Prophet, and whatever was denied to me it was because of my own shortcoming in doing so." Once he said, "One day I advanced my right foot first while entering the lavatory. Although it was by mistake, I was denied many an ecstatic experience on that day." Another time he asked a disciple, Sālih Khatlānī, to bring a few cloves from his pouch. The Shaikh expressed displeasure when he saw that Sālih had brought six cloves. He said, "My sufi seems to be ignorant of the *hadith* that Allah is *witr*[1] and He loves *witr*. It is commendable to keep in view the odd numbers of *witr*. But what do the people know of commendable acts? Even if this world and the next were awarded to some one for performing something liked by God, it would not be really a sufficient reward." One of the disciples of Shaikh Ahmad asked Shaikh Muhammad b. Fazl Ullah to tell him what he had seen at Sirhind. Shaikh Muhammad replied, "How can I explain everything I saw there, but I found the minutest details of the *sunnah* being acted upon with the utmost care. Nobody could have been so meticulous as he was." Another witness relates, "The inward perfection of Shaikh Ahmad is beyond my comprehension but I can say that on seeing Shaikh Ahmad I came to know that the accounts of the saints of old given in the books are no exaggaration, rather it seems that the writers have been reticent in giving those details. The entire day was spent in prayers and remembrance of God." A disciple of Shaikh Ahmad who used to attend to his ablution, bringing of the prayer mat etc., relates: "I get a little respite after the meals and during the last third part of the night. The Shaikh keeps on exhorting his disciples to engage themselves in prayers, remembrance and contemplation." He further quoted the Shaikh who used to say, "This world is a place of endeavour, so combine your inward state with your outward

1. *Lit. Witr* means odd number.

temperament and actions. Even the holy Prophet used to stand for such a length of time at prayers that his legs used to get swelled."

Shaikh Ahmad was well-versed in *fiqah* but he always consulted some authoritative book of jurisprudence whenever the need arose. So careful was he in this respect that he always had some books at hand whether he was in camp or cantonment, and he always preferred to act on the legal opinion of an accepted authority. He used himself to lead the prayers. Once explaining the reason for it he said, "Prayers remain incomplete without recitation of the *sūrah Fātiha*[1] according to the Shaf'eites and Malikites, and, therefore, they recite the *Fātiha* even behind an *imām*.[2] This view also finds support from a number of undoubted Traditions but Imām Abū Hanīfah does not consider it necessary to recite the *Fātiha* when the prayer is led by another man. A majority of juris-consults belonging to the Hanafite school are also agreed upon this view. However, as I try to act according to all the different schools, the easiest course to do so appears to lead the prayers myself."[3]

Shaikh Ahmad normally used to get up at midnight or when one-third of the night still remained; this was his settled routine whether it was summer or winter, or he was at his house or in a journey. After reciting certain supplications mentioned in the *ahādith* he performed ablution again, taking care to wash all the parts thoroughly. Normally he faced the *qiblah*[4] while performing ablutions, but changed his direction to north or the south while washing his feet. He also brushed

1 The first chapter of the Qur'ān.

2. One who leads the prayer.

3. Khwājā Muhammad Hāshim Kashmī quotes Shaikh Ahmad at another place as having said, "I recite *Fatiha* behind the *imām* and consider it preferable." *Zubdatul Muqāmāt*, p. 209

4. Directión of the K'abah, which all Muslims are required to face while performing prayers.

his teeth with *miswāk*[1] and recited the supplications prescribed for performing ablutions. Thereafter he offered a few *rak'ats* of voluntary prayers in which he normally recited some of the longer *sūrahs.* That ended, he contemplated for a while and then took a brief rest following the practice of the Prophet. He got up again early in the morning, performed ablution and said the *sunnat*[2] prayers at his house. In between the period of *sunnat* and *farz*[3] prayers, he normally kept on repeating silently; *Subhānallāh bihamdahi, Subhānallāh il-'Azīm*: (Holiness to Allah, and all praises are for Him; Holiness to Allah, the Exalted one.) The obligatory prayer of *fajr*[4] was started by him when it was still dark while he ended it when the early light of the dawn had appeared. In this manner the Shaikh used to act according to the different juristic schools which require morning devotions to be offered before or after the peep of dawn. He led the prayer himself and recited one of the longer *sūrahs*[5] of the Qur'ān, as was the practice of the Prophet. The time between the morning prayers and the prayer of *ishrāq*[6] which is offered when the sun has well risen, was spent in giving training of meditation to his disciples. Then, after the *ishrāq* prayers and recitation of supplications he went to his house where he enquired about the well-being of his family members and gave attention to their needs. This was followed by recitation of the Qur'ān after which he sent for those who came to see him or to seek his help in any matter. This was also the time fixed for meeting the selected friends and disciples whom he told about spiritual flights and spiritual perfections, taught the method of contemplation or listened to their experiences of spiritual elevation.

1. A tooth-cleaner made of wood, about a span long.
2. A prayer performed or commended by the Prophet.
3. An obligatory prayer.
4. Time for morning devotions performed before sunrise.
5. The *sūrahs* from *Al-Hujarāt* to *Al-Burūj* are known as the longer *sūrhas.*
6. A voluntary prayer offered at an hour or so after the sunrise.

Shaikh Ahmad normally asked them to be upward-looking, to follow the practices of the Prophet, keep themselves engaged in remembrance of God and to conceal their spiritual perfection. Oftentimes he explained the significance of *Lā Ilāh il-Allāh ; Muhammad-ur-Rasūlul-Allāh,* saying, that the entire universe was not even a drop in ocean as compared to this formula of true faith. The Shaikh also used to urge upon them to study *fiqah*[1] and seek the guidance of the scholars in finding out the injunctions of the *sharī'ah.*[2]

Shaikh Ahmad once said that the inward eyes of his mind have revealed to him that the world was like a sea of darkness because of the impious innovations while the *sunnah* of the Prophet emitted light in it like the glow-worms. The Shaikh hated speaking ill of any Muslim, nor any disciple dared to reflect discredit on others in his presence. He also tried to conceal his own spiritual experiences from others. Khwāja Mohammad Hāshim Kashmī relates that within the period extending to two years he saw drops of tears in the eyes of the Shaikh three or four times while explaining intricate matters of sufism.

Shaikh Ahmad used to go twice inside his house every day; first after the prayer of *chāsht*[3] and the second time after *zuhal-kubra.*[4] On the second occasion he used to take food with his sons and other members of family. If he found any one absent, he used to give instructions for keeping his share apart. He ate very little; sometimes it was for namesake only, as if he just shared the meals with others to follow the Prophet's *sunnah ;* for he spent more time in urging others to eat heartily, or presenting some dish to them.[5]

1. Jurisprudence of Islam.
2. The Law of Islam.
3. Voluntary prayer performed at about 11 a.m.
4. The time midway between sunrise and sunset.
5. *Hazarātul-Quds*, p. 87.

During the last few years of his life, when he mostly spent a secluded life, he used to keep fasts and take his food alone. Shaikh Ahmad did not recite *sūrah Fātiha* after the meals as was the custom with other mystics, for there was nothing to support this practice in the genuine Traditions. Similarly, he did not recite the *Fātiha* after the obligatory prayers like other sufis.

Shaikh Ahmad used to take a little rest after the mid-day meal in the way it is reported about the holy Prophet. The call to prayer at the time of *zuhr*[1] was given a bit early when the Shaikh performed the ablution and thereafter offered the voluntary prayers soon after the decline of the sun. The prayer ended, he either sat down to listen about one part of the Qur'ān recited by a *hāfiz*[2] or lectured to his disciples. He performed the *'asr*[3] at the appointed time and spent the interval up to the *maghrib*[4] prayers with his disciples in meditation. He used to offer four or six *rak'ats* of voluntary prayers after the obligatory prayers of *maghrib.* The night or *ishā*[5] prayers were performed by him just after the twilight of evening had disappeared. In the prayer of *witr* he used to recite both the supplications of *qunūt* prescribed by the Hanafite and Shaf'eite schools. The two voluntary *rak'ats* after *witr* were performed by him either sitting or standing, but in the old age he had left offering this orison. He did not perform the two prostrations after *witr* like others.

The Mujjadid used to retire to the mosque during the last ten days of the Ramadhān. He retired early to his bed after the prayers of *'ishā* and *witr*, and busied himself in reciting supplications and benedications *(darūd)* imploring mercy and blessings

1. Prayer offered when the sun begins to decline.
2. One who has committed the Qur'ān to his heart.
3. Prayer offered midway between decline of the sun and sunset.
4. Prayer offered after sunset.
5. Prayer after an hour and a half after sunset.

for the holy Prophet. The latter was usually recited a great deal by him on Fridays and Mondays. When he recited the Qur'ān one could see the sublime effect of the holy Scripture's intonation on his face. More often he recited, during the prayers and besides them, the verses which strike a note of awe or wonder or produce that effect through the peculiar style and symphony of the Qur'ān. He took care to observe all the directions enjoined in the *ahādith* for the performance of the prayers, offered the voluntary prayers after performing ablutions and on entering a mosque; performed no other voluntary prayer with the congregation except the *tarāwīh*[1]; and forbade others to perform the voluntary prayers of the 10th of Muharram or *Shab-i-Qadr*[2] collectively in congregation.

The Mujaddid always used to pay a visit to those who were taken ill and also made supplications for them. He often repaired to the cemetery to pray over the dead. Shaikh Ahmad delivered lectures on the exegesis, Traditions, jurisprudence, dialectics and mysticism and taught the books like *Tāfsīr Baidāwī*, *Sahih Bukhārī*, *Mishkāt-ul-Masābīh*, *Hidāyah*, *Bazdāwī*, *Mawāqif*, *'Awārif-ul-'Awārif* etc., but he never indulged in futile discussions. Towards the end of his life's journey, he lectured only occasionally and instructed his disciples to study the religious sciences. The Shaikh, in fact, gave greater importance to religious studies than mystical disciplines. He spent much of his time in devotions and supplications and seeking repentance of his sins, and thanked God a lot for the smallest favour.

The Mujaddid was very particular about Ramadhān when he recited the Qur'ān at least thrice during the month. Having committed the Qur'ān to the tablets of his memory, he used to recite the Qur'ān besides Ramadhān also and listened to its

1. The prayers, of usually twenty *rak'ats*, recited at night during the month of Ramadhān.
2. Lit. The night of power. A night in the month of Ramadhān wherein began the revelation of the Qur'ān.

recital by others.[1] He made haste in breaking the fasts, as was the practice of the Prophet, and delayed the pre-dawn meal during Ramadhān.[2]

His practice in the payment of poor-due *(zakāt)* was to pay it immediately on receiving the amount upon which the *zakāt* was payable without awaiting the completion of one year on its possession. He gave preference to the needy, mendicants, widows and poor relations in giving out the dues of the *zakāt*. He had a great desire to perform the *haj*, for which he made up his mind several times, but could not fullfil his wish for one reason or the other until the time arrived when he was summoned up for the last sleep.

Mujaddid was very courteous and polite in his manners, extremely considerate and benevolent to one and all and well-pleased to whatever fell to his own lot. His friends and relatives had, for a time, to face a hard time owing to the attitude of over-zealous officials, but the Mujaddid never complained and always remained resigned to God. If anybody came to see him, he always stood up to welcome the guest, seated the visitor with honour and carried on conversation on the subject he liked to discuss. However, he did not pay the same respect to non-believers even if they were men of substance or belonged to the ruling clique. He was always first to salute others; even his youngers could not take the lead over him in this regard. He was extremely considerate to those who were dependent on him. Whenever the news of anybody's death was communicated to him, he seemed to be visibly moved and immediately uttered the words: *Innā lillāhi wa innā ilaih rāje'ūn* (To God we belong and to Him shall we return), joined the funeral procession and prayed for the salvation of the departed soul.[3]

His dress consisted of a loose shirt and a robe over it—

1. *Zubdatul Muqāmāt*, pp. 192-215
2. *Hazratul Quds*, p. 91
3. *Ibid.*, pp. 91-92

the latter was dispensed with in the summer—and a turban whose loose end was kept hanging on the back. The pyjama worn by him left the ankles bare. On Fridays and the two *Ids* he used to put on a better dress. Whenever he donned a new dress, he gave the one worn by him to a servant or a relation or a guest. The Shaikh was normally paid a visit by fifty to sixty scholars, mystics and nobles every day; often their number rose to a hundered or more; and they were all entertained like guests.[1]

Features

Shaikh Badr-ud-dīn Sirhindī, a spiritual successor of Shaikh Ahmad who kept his company for seventeen years, has given his facial appearance in the *Hazaratul Quds*. He writes: "The Shaikh's complexion was wheatish but his forehead and cheeks glowed with a radiance that made it difficult to fix one's gaze on his face. The eyebrows were black, thick and long, curved like a bow, eyes were wide with snow-white eyeballs and jet black cornea; lips were delicate, red in colour, mouth was of a medium size, neither big nor small; the teeth were compact and shining like rubies; the beard was thick and long but quadrate in shape and the cheeks had but a few hair. The Shaikh was of a moderate height, slim and delicate in appearance."

Sons of Shaikh Ahmad

The Mujaddid was blessed with seven sons, of whom three—Muhammad Farrukh, Muhammad 'Isā and Muhammad Ashraf—died at a tender age. The eldest son Khwājā Muhammad Sādiq lived to attain the age of 25 years and died in 1025/1616 after completing his formal education and fathoming the secrets of mysticism. The remaining three who survived their father were Khwājā Muhammad Sa'eed, Khwājā Muhammad M'asūm

1. *Hazaratul, Quds*, p. 92

and Khwājā Muhammad Yahyā.

Khwājā Muhammad Sādiq had attained spiritual perfection during the lifetime of his father. The Mujaddid used to praise him for his perfection both in knowledge and inward qualities. In one of his letters Shaikh Ahmad wrote about him: "This dear son of mine is an agglomeration of this mendicant's mystical cognitions and a scripture of his stages of devotion and attraction."[1]

The second son Khwājā Muhammad Sa'eed was born in 1005/1596 and died on 27th Jamāda-ul-Ākhir 1070/28th March, 1660. He took an active part in propagating the mystic order of his father and guided the seekers after the path of spirit.[2]

Khwājā Muhammad M'asūm, the third son of Shaikh Ahmad, lived to become the renowned spiritual successor of his father. As a virtuous son of a pious father he popularised the Mujaddidyah order far and near. His famous cloister of Mujaddidyah mystics at Delhi was graced by Khwājā Saif-ud-dīn, Mirzā Mazhar Jān-i-Jānān, Shāh Ghulām 'Alī and Shāh Ahmad Sa'eed. It was the seminary where Maulānā Khālid Rūmī got the training of spiritual perfection at the feet of Shāh Ghulām 'Alī and then spread its message abroad throughout Irāq, Syria, Kurdistān and Turkey.[3]

The letters written by Khwāja Muhammad M'asūm, since compiled in three volumes, provide a commentary on the *Maktūbāt* of his father and explain intricate issues of mystical experience. They are valued for their depth and richness. A

1. *Maktūbāt*, Vol. I, letter No. 277. For a detailed account see *Zubdatul Muqamāt*, pp. 303-306
2. For a detailed account about him see *Zubdatul Muqāmāt*, pp. 308-15.
3. *See* Allāmā Sh'āmī's *Sil al-Hosām al-Hindī li-Nasrata Maulānā Khālid Naqshbandī* and *Sharah Durr Mukhtār*. The writer had had the privilege of meeting several mystics of this order like Shaikh Ibrāhīm Ghulāminī, Shaikh Abul Khair Maidānī, Shaikh Muhammad Nabhān in the Arab countries. The mystic Shaikhs of this order are still to be found in Syria, Irāq, Turkey and Kurdistān.

separate treatise would be required to describe his achievements.

Aurangzīb had taken oath of fealty to him and was guided in the mystical discipline by his son Khwājā Saif-ud-dīn. Khwājā Muhammad M'asūm refers to Aurangzīb in his letters as the 'Defender-Prince of Faith' whom he guided and urged to take the sceptre in his hand for rooting out the harmful effects of Akbar's Dīn-i-Ilāhī from India.

Khwājā Muhammad M'asūm was born on 11th Shawwāl 1007 A.H.[1] and he died on the 9th Rabī al-Awwal, 1079 A.H.[2]

The fourth son of Shaikh Ahmad, Khwājā Muhammad Yahyā, was only 9 years of age when his father died. He completed his formal education under the care of his brothers who also guided him on the spiritual path of his father. He died in 1096/1685.

1. 27th April, 1599 A.D.
2. 7th August, 1668 A.D.

CHAPTER VI

THE CORE OF THE MUJADDID'S MOVEMENT

What does it constitute the nucleus of Mujaddid's revivalist movement and what was his achievement?

All those who are well-posted with the religious situation in the world of Islam at the end of the first millennium, that is, in the sixteenth century A.D., in general, and the developments in India,[1] in particular, are agreed that the achievement of Shaikh Ahmad lies in his remarkable success in protecting the Islamic creed which deserves to be called by what is known as *tajdīd* (revivalism) in the *hadīth* phraseology.[2] The accomplishment was indeed so perfect that the endeavour of Shaikh Ahmad

1. The religious condition of Muslims in India has been described, albeit briefly, in the first two chapters.
2. A well known *hadīth* of the *Sunan Abī Dāwūd* says: Allah will at the end of each century bring forward one who will revive the faith of this *ummah*. For a detailed discussion relating to this *hadīth* see *Jāmi ul-Mujaddidīn* by Maulana Abdul Bari Nadwi and the scholarly introduction to the book by Saiyid Sulaimān Nadwi.

became a synonym of *tajdīd* or revivalism as it was something unprecedented in the history of Islam.

But, what was the endeavour of Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindī? It consisted of reviving the thought and spirit of Islam in India. It aimed at curbing the greatest menance of the time by restoring conviction in the prophethood of Muhammad and reasserting the abiding truth of *sharī'ah.* Shaikh Ahmad demonstrated the hollowness of theosophical thought based on neo-Platonist theosophy which professed to attain the knowledge of God through spiritual ecstasy unrelated to the path shown by the Prophet of Islam. The theory of *Wahdat-ul-Wujūd* (Unity of Being) and *hama ost* (All is He) had captured the heart and mind of Muslim masses so powerfully that their conviction in the truth of Islam was gradually giving place to an eclecticism which was giving rise to the danger of a complete disintegration of the Muslim society. The Mujaddid presented the alternative theory or *Wahdat-us-Shuhūd* (Unity of Manifestation), launched a vigorous attack against *bid'ah* (innovation in religion), denied the commonly accepted *bid'at-i-hasanah* (pious innovation) and revolutionised the Muslim society in a way that it completely discarded Akbar's thought. The Mujaddid unfolded his well-conceived plan of reform and renovation so thoughtfully that, on the one hand, a man like Muhi-ud-dīn Aurangzīb ascended the throne once occupied by Akbar and, on the other, Shāh Walī Ullah and his worthy successors took upon themselves the task of bringing about a religious awakening and spiritual regeneration of the Indian Muslims through teaching and preaching of the *kitāb* (the holy Qur'ān) and the *sunnah.* They caused a chain of educational institutions to be set up, reformed the Muslim society of its un-Islamic customs and usages, awakened the spirit of *jihād*, and made India a centre of Islamic learning, particularly that of *hadīth.* It was, thus, through the efforts of the Mujaddid that India became the focal point of Islamic thought and a harbinger of its call.

But the question still remains as to what was the central point of his wide-ranging revivalist endeavour, the single greatest achievement among a series of his brilliant accomplishments?

Different persons have tried to answer this question in different ways, perhaps, according to their own inclinations. And they fall into three categories.

(1) There are certain persons who hold that Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindī deserves to be called Mujaddid Alf Thānī, that is, Renovator of the second millennium because he regained India for Islam which was about to slip into the hands of religious eclecticism and thus saved it, during the eleventh century A.H. (sixteenth century A.D.), from the fate it was to meet later on in the thirteenth century A.H. (nineteenth century A.D.). In fact, they argue, he saved the Indian Muslims from the immediate danger of a comprehensive religious, intellectual and cultural apostasy which had been made virtually unavoidable by Akbar's passionate drive and iron will and the intelligence of his sharp-witted advisers like Mullā Mubārak, Faizī and Abul Fazl. Had this onslaught succeeded in subverting Islam at that time it would have undoubtedly been far more serious and would have had more far-reaching consequences than the political decline suffered by Islam through the rise of non-Muslim forces in the eighteenth century and the subsequent consolidation of the British power in the beginning of the nineteenth century. Iqbāl has perhaps alluded to this fact in one of his couplets in which he says:

He guarded in Ind the *millat's* treasure,
For Allāh forewarned him at the right juncture.

(2) There is another group of scholars which thinks that the Mujaddid's revivalist endeavour consists of advocating the superiority of *sharī'ah* (the law) over *tarīqah* (the mystic path) in such a forceful, confident and authoritative manner as was never done by anybody before him. He made it abundantly

clear that the *tarīqah* was meant to sub-serve the *sharī'ah* and this checked the tendency to overlook or rather reject the *sharī'ah*. India being the home of *yoga* and asceticism there was no dearth of misguided mystics who had blended mystic practices with philosophic meditation reposing trust in self-mortification, spiritual ecstasy and direct intuition. This tendency was arrested by the Mujaddid at the crucial moment for nobody was able to claim after him that the *sharī'ah* and *tarīqah* were two separate disciplines or that compliance with the *sharī'ah* was not essential for the *tarīqah*.

(3) The third group consists of those who hold that the vigorous attack by the Mujaddid on the concept of *Wahdat ul-Wujūd* or the Unity of Being constituted real keynote of his revivalist effort. In their view nobody had launched out so forcefully against that misguided doctrine before him. He succeeded in stemming it so effectively that no body raised his voice in its favour in the succeeding centuries. The religious and intellectual cricles came to accept the Mujaddid's authoritative views on the subject with such a confidence in him that the contradictory notions and thoughts were thereafter regarded as blind and nacked ignorance. Saiyid Manāzir Ahsan Gīlānī has expressed this view very trenchantly in one of his brilliant articles entitled 'The Revivalist Achievement of the Second Millennium' in which he says:

> "The hairsplitting argumentations on the niceties of *Wahdat ul-Wujūd* and *Wahdat-us-Shuhūd* and the pedantic wranglings of the scholastics and mystics over the *sharī'ah* and *tarīqah* have been so mixed up with the genuine revivalist endeavours of Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindī that today the Shaikh is blindly called Renovator of the second millennium without giving thought to his great achievements."[1]

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1. M. Manzoor Nomani, *Tazkira Imām Rabbānī Mujaddid Alf Thānī*, p. 27

Trust in Muhammad's Prophethood

But the fact is that the greatest achievement of the Mujaddid which is the nucleus of his entire endeavour or the focal point of his multi-dimentional reformatory programme was his success in creating a trust in the need and abiding nature of Muhammad's prophethood. It was a task never undertaken by any reformer before him, perhaps, as the need for it was not felt in the bygone ages nor any philosophy or movement challenging this concept had reared its head in the earlier times.[1]

It was this principle of reform and renovation which struck at the root of perversion threatening to subvert the religious, spiritual and intellectual bases of the Muslim society. The authors of this crookedness were the followers of the Nuqtawī movement of Irān who had openly revolted against the prophethood of Muhammad on the ground that the term of his apostleship had ended with the completion of one thousand years of Islamic era. They claimed that the new age required a fresh principle of human action based on reason and philosophy which was furnished by Mahmūd of Basakhwān who had also claimed that his disciples and the centres of his cult would be in Irān and India.[2] We can treat Akbar's Dīn Ilāhī and his new order as a ramification of this deviation whose zealous supporters claimed to replace the apostleship of Muhammad and the Law of Islam in India by another system of belief. Innovations and deviations were making inroads in the religious and social life of the Muslims; even purely religious devotions and rituals were absorbing these ideas of agnosticism; a new code of life and behaviour was gradually getting legitimised; and all these were posing a challenge to the prophethood of Muhammad and the way of life taught by him.

1. We find something of the thought in question in Ibn Taimiyah's writings particularly in the *An-Nabūwāt*, *Nuqṣ-ul-Mantiq* and *Al-Radd al-Mantiqiyīn*, but he does not go beyond making some sketchy references to the principle.
2. See first chapter.

Then, in the train of these false pretensions, came the theory of *Wahdat ul-Wujūd* which, according to its votaries, was based on ecstatic revelations. Its most ardent advocates had never claimed that either the Prophet of Islam had ever preached this precept or the Prophet's companions or their successors had propagated this doctrine, but, consciously or unconsciously, it tried to assert itself as a doctrine antagonistic to the concept of prophethood and revealed guidance. The more deeply it took root in the Muslim society by capturing the minds and hearts of the people, the more Muslim commonality lost its conviction in the infallability of Islam as the only saving principle. The doctrine of *Wahdat ul-Wujūd* had thus prepared the way for indifference and lethargy, irreligion and disbelief towards religious observances although some of its preachers were pious mystics who punctiliously observed the rules of *sharī'ah* and detested transgression of the law as promoted by pantheistic doctrines.

The followers of the *Imāmiyah* creed could also be included in this misguided sect. They believed in the divine and indefeasible right of the *imāms* to lead the Muslims and venerated them as divinely appointed leaders in the same way as the prophets of God.[1] In a like manner, the view held by it about a majority of the holy Prophet's companions disclaimed the marvellous effect of prophetic guidance and contradicted the Quranic revelation : *He it is who hath sent among the unlettered ones a messenger of their own, to recite unto them His revelations and to make them grow, and to teach them the Scripture and*

1. The books accepted as authentic by this sect hold that an *imām* is, intrinsically and extrinsically, sanctified without a spot of blemish or the capacity to sin; whose obedience is incumbent on all believers. He can work miracles and is blessed with intuitional knowledge of everything connected with the law. The *imām* will continue to appear in every age till the Day of Reckoning arrives as

(Continued on the next page)

Wisdom.[1] This sect was speedily extending its influence in India owing to certain political and other reasons, and the Indian Muslim society, though subscribing to the creed of *Ahl-Sunnah wal-Jam'ah,* was gradually accepting many of the *Imāmiyah* thoughts and customs.

By reviving conviction and trust in the prophethood of Muhammad the Mujaddid tore apart all the obstructions created by the Greek and Iranian philosophies and the Indian and Egyptian[2] mystical thoughts as if he broke by one stroke all those barriers which had concealed the true faith from the sight of the then Muslim society.

Limitation of Spiritual and Intellectual Faculties

A great achievement of the Mujaddid as a Renovator of faith consisted of his demonstrating the incompetence of knowledge gained through intellectual process as well as spiritual intuition to penetrate the metaphysical truths, such as, the gnosis of God, His attributes, the ultimate truth and reality of existence, etc. He showed that the knowledge gained through either of these sources was neither beyond doubt nor free from mistake. He proved that the true knowledge of God could be had through revelation vouchsafed to the prophets for it occupied a higher place in comparison to

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a sign of God. (As-Shaikh Muhammad Husain Āl-Kāshiful Ghita's *Asl ash-Shī'ata wa Usūlha,* a commentary of Al-Tūsī's *Kitāb ash-Shāfī lil Sharīf al-Murtazā*). Abū Zāhrā writes in the *Kitāb Tārīkh al-Mazāhib al-Islāmiyah,* Vol. I, that all the scholars of the Imāmiyah sect are agreed on the equality of an *imām* and a prophet. The only difference, according to them, between a *wasī* and a *nabī* is that the former is not a recipient of revelation like a prophet of God.

1. Q. LXII: 2
2. Egypt had once been a great centre of neo-Platonist philosophy with such theosophists as Plotinus, Porphery and Proclus.

intellect in the same way as intellect was superior to sensory perceptions. Thus, the knowledge of God and the correct way of divine worship could be known from the prophets alone. He established that the ancient Greek philosophers had committed grevious mistakes in understanding the true nature and attributes of God. This was because there was nothing like pure or abstract intellect nor there existed any pure and unmixed spiritual intuition or ecstatic inspiration, free from all intrinsic and extrinsic influences. The mystics and theosophists had blundered, explained Mujaddid, like the philosophers, because they failed to recognise that intellect and theosophy were both equally incompetent to get at the knowledge pertaining to God. This meant that the prophethood remained as the only trustworthy medium of obtaining knowledge about God and His attributes and commandments.

The Mujaddid went further to affirm that the pure and unmixed intellect was a myth: human intellect was influenced by subjective factors like one's beliefs and concepts while external events and conditions also threw their weight into the scale. Thus, the stand-point of intellect was always coloured by one's subjective consciousness and objective observations. The Mujaddid demonstrated that the intellect was a defective medium to discover the ultimate truth.

He also drew a line of demarcation between the purification of self and the purification of heart and explained the reason for making a distinction between the two. He afforded proof to show that one who upholds prophethood from the core of his heart really possesses adequate reasons for his convictions. Thus, acceptance of prophetic information with the stipulation of its confirmation by one's intellect really amounted to its rejection. He also explained that nothing in the prophetic teachings was against human reason or intellect and that there was a lot of difference between a thing being beyond one's intellect or understanding and its being against reason or logic.

The revolutionary concepts propounded by the Mujaddid about the nature of intellectual cognition and spiritual inspiration caused a flutter in the then intellectual and religious circles and opened the way to the new method of inductive reasoning. On the one hand, he gave a lie to the accepted notions of the day which were claimed to have been based on pure intellect, and, on the other, established the truth of prophecy and transcendental realities known through it. It was, in fact, a concept attempting fundamental reconstruction of thought by rejecting the prevalent principles of thought and accepted mental impressions of the then intellectuals, religious and spiritual circles. It was not a product of its time—the then scholastic disquisitions or intellectual deliberations—for the world took a few centuries more to arrive at the same conclusion. It was naught but a favour from God, a divine regeneration which helped him to discover the highest unitary principle of thought essential for the success of his revivalist call given at the beginning of the second millennium of the Islamic era. Or, one can say, it was the reward for his spirited defence of prophethood and the *sharī'ah* for which he had been preparing himself from the very outset of his career by following the precepts and practices of the holy Prophet of Islam.

In order to understand the significance of Shaikh Ahmad's thought hinted at the foregoing paragraphs, it would be necessary to have a closer look at the perspective giving rise to the questions that were engaging attention of the learned and the scholastics of the time.

Some Basic Questions

There are a few questions of primary importance not only for a life of virtue and goodness in this world but also for the redemption of our soul in the afterlife. These questions are: Who is the Creator of this universe? What are His attributes? In what way is He related to us and what is our corresponding

position with regard to Him? Are there things or actions that please or displease Him and, if so, what are they? Is there any life after death? And, if there is one, what is its nature? Are there also some instructions available to us for success in the afterlife?

Any attempt to answer these questions will go in search of the person and attributes of the Divine Being, Alpha and Omega of the world, hereafter, paradise, hell, revelation, existence of angels and similar other metaphysical questions that are fundamental to every creed and religion.

Man has been trying to find satisfactory answers to these questions in two ways; first, through his intellect and, the second, by taking recourse to theosophical techniques. The first we call philosophy and the other mysticism.

But, both these methods are basically wrong for they base their inquiry on certain presumptions which arise from an incorrect appreciation of these issues. It seems worthwhile to elucidate this point with the help of the Mujaddid's letters which are preceded here by a brief introduction to the issue under consideration.

Critique of Pure Reason and Ecstatic Inspiration

In regard to intellect, it ought to be kept in mind that it is not self-sufficient to perform its functions of knowing, analysing and reasoning since it has to depend on other subordinate faculties. In taking a view of unknown and intangible objects it has to rely on the information and experiences it has gathered about the things already known to it through sensations of external objects perceived by sensory organs. It compiles and analyses the information stored by it to draw conclusions from these premises about the things not known to it or which cannot be made known to it through the sensorial perceptions. If we examine the working of intellect and its way of reasoning we will find that all the conclusions drawn by it about what we call higher realities are drawn from these very primary

sensory perceptions which, by themselves, are insufficient to supply the information intellect has been trying to bring out through analysis and compilation of the data thus collected and then by drawing inferences from them.

Now, it is obvious that in a sphere where sensory organs are helpless: they cannot provide the basic data nor can furnish any information to base the conclusions or draw inferences; the most nimble and sharp intellect would be helpless in this matter much in the same way as a man trying to cross a sea without a ship or trying to fly without an aeroplane. Nobody howsoever brilliant can solve mathematical equations without first learning the numerals nor a man can read any writing without mastering the alphabets and script of a language. The same is true of recondite realities beyond the ken of human perception because intellect does not possess even the primary data that can enable it to hazard its guess in these matters.

Another salient fact to be kept in mind is that human intellect has a limited range beyond which it cannot go. Likewise all the sensory organs of man operate within a limited compass. Our vision or the faculty of seeing can be used to observe a thousand things but not to hear even one sound: the same is the case with other sensory organs which work under a limited sphere typical to each of them. The intellect and sensory organs have not been endowed with an unlimited power.

The scope and reach of intellect is apparently wider than that of other sensory organs but it has its own limits. Ibn Khaldūn has given a very apt illustration to show the limited scope of intellect.

> "The mind is an accurate scale, whose recordings are certain and reliable; but to use it to weigh questions relating to the Unity of God, or the afterlife, or the nature of prophecy, or of the divine qualities, or other such subjects falling outside its range, is like trying to use a goldsmith's scale to weigh mountains. This does not mean that the scale is in itself inaccurate.

"The truth of the matter is that mind has limits within which it is rigidly confined; it cannot therefore hope to comprehend God and His qualities; itself being only one of the many atoms created by God."[1]

There is yet another fact, conceded now, that the intellect cannot give its verdict independently and objectively with complete impartiality. Those who have studied the working of intellect know that there is nothing like 'pure intellect'. Attitudes and sentiments, dispositions and circumstances, the way it is groomed and disciplined, beliefs and fascinations, doubts and apprehensions and inattention and forgetfulness can hardly be shaken off by the intellect in the discharge of its function in a perfect and judicious manner as commonly believed by the people.

But, one is amazed to find that the philosophers have completely disregarded these significant facts in bringing their minds to bear upon the subjects like the nature and attributes of God and similar other matters without possessing even the rudimentary information about them. They have investigated and discussed these issues with the self-confidence of a chemist who makes his experiments to test the properties of different chemicals. The fact of the matter is that the theories and discussions of such philosophers are no better than fantasies and fables or the fairy tales of metaphysics of which a few samples will be cited later on.

Theosophy is another method of attaining the knowledge of God just the other way round but similar to that adopted by intellectualism and philosophy. Its guiding principle is that intellect, learning and reasoning faculties block the way instead of opening the door to the discovery of ultimate truth. It considers the vision of Ultimate Reality necessary for attaining its knowledge, and this can be had through self-purification,

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1. *An Arab Philosophy of History* (Selections from the Prolegomena of Ibn Khaldun of Tunis), Tr. Charles Issawi, London, 1950, p. 166

illumination of the spirit and developing an inner sense which can perceive the spiritual realities and metaphysical truths in the same way as eyes can see material objects. This sense is developed, according to them, when the earthly nature of man and his outer faculties or senses are completely suppressed and subdued. Thus the spiritual cognition of reality is possible only through the pure and unmixed intellect and inward illumination which are produced by penance and self-mortification aided by meditation and contemplation.

It is true that man possesses an internal faculty to perceive higher realities. In fact, there may be a few more similar faculties and senses but all of them are no more than human faculties—weak, limited, fallible and impressionable. Like the bodily senses and faculties, the sources of acquiring knowledge through sensory impressions, there is always the likelihood of committing a mistake or getting a deceptive impression through this inner sense also. Had it not been so, the ecstatic intuitions and spiritual inspirations of the theosophists and mystics would not have differed so widely in their impressions of what they deem to be the Truth or Reality. Such differences are common among the Muslim and non-Muslim mystics.[1]

In any case, there is nothing like 'pure intellect': like the ordinary faculty of reasoning, the inner intellect is also impressed by external observations and perceptions and touched by internal passions and affections; and hence it cannot be expected to reflect the true image of a thing without any possibility of mistake. Similarly, the beliefs and surroundings of the mystics and theosophists colour their spiritual perceptions and that is why we find in the observations of neo-Platonic mystics the traces of Greek and Egyptian superstitions. The ideas that sometime appear to them as realities during their ecstatic transports cannot be treated as anything more

1. See the author's book *Religion and Civilization*, specially the chapter on 'Mysticism'.

than the product of their imaginations, devoid of any reality or existence outside their minds.[1]

Metaphysical questions are outside the reach of mysticism just as philosophy cannot be expected to solve them. Theosophy[2] or illuminism affords a glimpse of the spiritual world; certain figures and colours are seen and some mental impressions of articulate or inarticulate sounds are heard but they leave one as unenlightened of the Will and Pleasure of God, the divine law and the life and stages of the hereafter as any other man pretending to be wise in his own conceit.

The fact of the matter is that philosophy and theosophy are cast in the same mould: the spirit underlying both of them is one and the same. Both want to attain the ultimate reality without the agency of prophethood; the destination of both is the same; one wants to reach it with the wing of its imagination while the other desires to get at it through a spiritual tunnel of inner faculties.

The knowledge of Infinite Being can, however, be attained only from the messengers of God who are invested with the mantle of prophecy and initiated into the secret of God's nature and attributes, and the kingdom of heavens and the earth. God communicates His commandments to them, tells them of His likes and dislikes, and makes them intermediaries between Him and other human beings. They are, in truth and reality, the greatest blessing of God, since they make available that invaluable knowledge which cannot be acquired through years of philosophical deliberations or mystical meditations and penance and self-purification. In the words of the Qur'ān, *This is of the bounty of Allah unto us and unto mankind; but most men give not thanks.*[3]

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1. See *Religion and Civilization* for a detailed account of it.
2. Theosophy in its original sense, before the recent movement in the beginning of this century distorted it to mean a pseudo-spiritualist movement.
3. Q. XII: 38

In very truth, most men give not thanks, and the philosophers and theosophists are those ungrateful folks who ignore the bounties of God made available to them in the shape of blessed messengers of God by depending on their own efforts to attain the reality they could have got for nothing. But what has been the result of their labour spread over hundreds of years? Instead of coming nearer to the Truth they have gone farther away from it: deluded by their hazy and contradictory researches, they have brought forth merely rediculous propositions and incredulous sophistications—*Beholdest thou not those who returned the favour of Allah with infidelity and caused their people to alight in the dwelling of perdition.*[1]

Mujaddid had a thorough knowledge of philosophy and mysticism but he was also cognizant of the worth and merit of prophetic attainments. He expounded the fallacies of philosophers and mystics by critically analysing their mistaken propositions which not only showed his deep knowledge of these disciplines but also provided the base for his reformative endeavour. For the entire system of religious thought and attainment of spiritual cognition depends on the question of source of knowledge about the nature and attributes of God; on it rests the man's understanding of his own beginning and end and the path of virtue to be taken by him for his salvation. Can it be had through speculation and meditation, as claimed by philosophy, or through penance, self-mortification and inner enlightenment, as asserted by the mystics and theosophists, or else can it be achieved through faith and following the path of the prophets of God? This is really the starting point for having vision of the truth and reality of things but the path taken to achieve it goes into three directions which never meet again: *Verily this is My path, straight; follow it then, and follow not other ways; that will deviate you from His way. Thus He enjoineth you,*

1. Q. XIV: 28

that haply ye may fear God.[1]

Mujaddid's writing on the subject, showing his deep insight into the matter, are scattered in his numerous letters. Some of these are arranged here under apporpriate headings.

Limitation of Intellect and the Knowledge of Omnipotent Creator

"Thanks be to Allah that He graciously led us to Islam and made us a follower of Muhammad (peace be upon him). The prophets of God (on whom be peace) are a blessing of God to humanity since it was through these prophets that God instructed us, possessing a limited and imperfect intellect, about His nature and attributes. He acquainted us of His quintessence, taking due care of the inadequacy of our understanding and told us of His likes and dislikes along with the things detrimental or beneficial for us in this world and the hereafter. Had these intermediaries not been there between us and God, human intellect would have failed to demonstrate the existence of omnific Creator of the world and had also been helpless in determining His competence and power. The philosophers of antiquity prided in their wisdom but denied the existence of the Creator of this universe, and attributed the occurrence of everything to time which shows their gross ignorance. The discourse about the Lord of heavens and the earth between Abraham (peace be upon him) and Nimrod, which finds a mention in the Qur'ān, is known to one and all. Similarly, Pharaoh had told the chiefs of Egypt, "I know not of a God for you except me,"[2] and threatened Moses (peace be upon him), "If thou wilt take a god other than me, I shall place thee among the prisoners."[3] That foolish king even commanded one of his ministers, "Wherefore kindle (fire)

1. Q. VI: 154
2. Q. XXVIII: 38
3. Q. XXVI: 29

thou for me, O Hāmān, to bake the mud; and set up for me a lofty tower in order that I may survey the god of Mūsā; and lo! I deem him of the liars".[1] Thus, to be brief, intellect is incapable of ascertaining the existence of the Ultimate Reality and nothing save the guidance by the messengers of God can help one to attain the knowledge about Him."[2]

Stupidity of Greek Philosophers

The expositions of Greek philosophers about the Lord and Creator of the universe, known to them as the First Cause, and their cosmogony offer two of the best examples of the flight of imagination of these philosophers who have built castles in the air on the basis of lame and impotent surmises. The details in this regard can be seen in the philosophical treatises or the books on creed and dialectics *(kalām)* since the limited compass of this work would not permit this issue to be discussed here in detail or to elucidate their paradoxes.

However, in order to appreciate the view-point of the Mujaddid and the reason for his trenchant criticism of the fantastic assumptions and inferences drawn by the Greek philosophers, we deem it proper to give here the ontological hierarchy of these philosophers which is closely bound to their cosmological sciences of genesis and command. Voluminous treatises exist for and against these hypothesis but it would be sufficient to mention here this hierarchy alone.

The First Cause or the Necessary Being is a Unity. Since it is an accepted fact that from Unity only unity can come into being, and the universe is composed of different matters, the latter cannot emanate from the former. The existence of the First Cause, however, generates Intellection, without its knowledge, will or direction, just as a lamp diffuses light and the shadow accompanies man. Thus,

1. Q. XXVIII: 38
2. *Maktūbāt*, Vol. III, No. 33

the First Intellect is contingent in essence but it has neither substantiality nor a tangible mass. It has the knowledge of its essence and the Necessary Being: it may be called an angel or First Intellect or may be known by any other name; yet its being contingent in essence gives rise to the Second Intellect, the soul of the Heaven of heavens (the ninth heaven) and its body. The Second Intellect generates in a similar manner the Third Intellect, the soul of the heaven of Zodiac and its body. Then, the Third Intellect brings about the Fourth Intellect, the soul of the planetary sphare of Saturn and its body. The Fourth Intellect, in its turn, produces the Fifth Intellect, known as the soul of the sphere of Jupiter and its body. The Fifth Intellect likewise brings on the Sixth Intellect, the soul of the sphere of Mars and its body. The Sixth Intellect opens the door to Seventh Intellect, the soul of the sphere of Sun and its body. The Seventh Intellect gives birth to the Eighth Intellect, the sphere of Venus and its body. The Eighth Intellect sets afloat the Ninth Intellect, the sphere of Mercury and its body. Finally, the Ninth Intellect gives birth to the Tenth Intellect, the sphere of Moon and its body. This last Intellection known as the Active Intellect causes the stuffing of the lunar planetary sphere with matter which gives rise to generation and corruption owing to the interaction of Active Intellect and the nature of planetary spheres. The elements combine in different ways owing to the motion of planets and thus they give origin to different vegetations and animals. These are the ten Intellections and nine heavens.

This hierarchy actually represents the mythology of the Greeks which was designated as philosophy and metaphysics. Later on, people started giving thought to it and started discussing, in all seriousness, whether this anatomy of being implied some philosophical truth or it was merely a figment of imagination. This, by the way, reminds one of the Qur'ānic

verses which says:

> "I made them not to witness the creation of the heavens and the earth, nor their own creation; nor choose I misleaders for (My) helpers."[1]

Imām Ghazzālī is perfectly correct in his assertion that this ontological hierarchy is simply an illogical assumption or rather darkness within darkness. He further says that if anybody starts describing his dream in similar terms it would be construed as his madness.[2]

At another place he writes, "I wonder how such things can be accepted by the philosophers who are inclined to hair-splitting of every issue, for, these explanations can hardly satisfy even a man out of his wits."[3]

The philosophers have negated the perfection and attributes of God in regard to creation of beings, making Him an impotent and dormant Divine Essence, supposedly for establishing transcedence and glorification of the Necessary Being. Imām Ghazzālī goes on further to say that:

> "Anybody who is satisfied about the position of God thus determined by this proposition, he verily assigns Him an status even lower to that of a being having knowledge of its own essence; for, a being having cognizance of its own essence and of others would be definitely on a higher plane than the one which has the awareness of its own essence only. This quibbling in showing reverence to God drove these men to twist the meaning of reverence and perverted the very sense of the word, making it to signify an inactive and dormant Being, unaware of what was happening in the world. The only difference is that He has the knowledge of His own essence (which is absent in the lifeless objects). Allah chastises those who

1. Q. XVIII: 52
2. *Tahāfat ul-Falāsifah*, p. 30
3. *Ibid.*, p. 33

go astray from the right path shown by Him; they overlook that God has said, "*I made them not to witness the creation of the heavens and the earth.*" They mistrust God; for, they entertain the belief that the Truth and Essence of the Supreme Being can be fathomed by human senses. These are the persons who are proud of their intellectual capacities and hold the view that a man endowed with intellect need not follow the prophets and their adherents. The net result is that they have ultimately to acknowledge the conclusions drawn from those philosophies which, however, boil down to something that is bewildering even in the form of a dream."[1]

All these aberrations recall to our mind the worth and grace of prophethood—*we could not truly have been led aright if Allah had not guided us.*[2] This illustration provides an unequivocal example of the inadequacy of intellect and the failure of philosophers in solving the questions of metaphysics although they have made their mark in the field of mathematics and other physical sciences. It is hard to believe how they conceived the Supreme Being as an existence dormant and helpless and having no knowledge except of His own Essence—the characteristics they would not like to be attributed to their own selves or even to a lower creation.

"Glorified be thy Lord, the Lord of Majesty,
From that which they attribute (unto Him),
And peace be unto those sent (to warn),
And praise be to Allah, Lord of the worlds!"[3]

Now let us cast a glance on the writings of the Mujaddid on this subject, extracted from his different letters.

"Had Intellect been adequate to comprehend God, the Greek philosophers who had set up reason as the

1. *Tahāfat-ul-falāsifah*, p. 31
2. Q. VII: 43
3. Q. XXXVII: 180 182

sole guiding principle would not have roved in the valley of infidelity and unbelief; they would have rather been more cognizant of the Pure Being than others. But they happened to be the most un-enlightened fellows in regard to the nature and attributes of God. They took the Divine Being to be inert and ineffectual and held that nothing emanated from Him save the Active Intellect. And, even the Active Intellect had, of itself, diffused from Him as a necessary consequence and not because of His active desire or will. These philosophers thus invented the Active Intellect to which they diverted the role of producing events and accidents in the world from the Creator of the heavens and the earth. They took out the consequence from the Ultimate Cause and assigned it to what they had concocted. They held the view that the consequence ensued from the nearest cause and the Causing Cause had nothing to do with the resultant eventuality. They considered, in their foolishness, that unaccountability of God for the sequence of events was the mark of His perfection and regarded His inertness and ineffectiveness as His glorification despite the fact that God calls Himself the Lord of the East and the Lord of the West.

"These empty-headed persons had presumed that they need not have a God, nor it was necessary to supplicate and pray to Him. They ought to have beseeched Active Intellect in the hour of their need and invoked its blessings for solving their difficulties, for, in their opinion, the real authority and power vested in it. Or, rather, Active Intellect had also no choice but to function according to the role assigned to it. It was, therefore, inappropriate to beseech the Active Intellect too for the fulfilment of their needs. The fact of the matter is that, as stated by the Qur'ān, '*the disbelievers have no patron*',[1] neither God nor

1. Q. XLVII: 11

Active Intellect. What is this Active Intellect, after all? It manages all the affairs of the world and to it are attributed all occurrances and events. But, its existence is also questionable since it depends on philosophical hypotheses which are incorrect and incomplete in themselves according to the Islamic doctrine of inference. It is foolish to ascribe the existence of all creations to a supposed and unprovable thing rather than to the All-Powerful and Absolute Being. It will, in fact, be degrading for the creations to trace their existence to something unsubstantial and illusory, a thing invented by philosophy; they would rather like to fade away and come to naught than take pleasure in their existence through a fatuous nihility and thus be deprived of their connection with the Almighty Supreme Being. *Dreadfull is the word that cometh out of their mouths; they speak not but a lie.*[1] Disbelievers belonging to a country of infidels who worship idols are wiser than these philosophers for the former at least beseech God in the hour of difficulty and seek the intercession of their deities to send up their prayers to the Supreme Being.

"Still more amazing is the attitude of those who regard these blockheaded persons as philosophers and paragons of wisdom and trace all knowledge to them. Most of their propositions, particularly those relating to metaphysics are wrong and opposed to the Divine Scripture and Traditions of the Prophet. How can they be called men of wisdom; except, of course, in a sarcastic way, such as, one addresses a blind man as clear-eyed."[2]

Inadequacy of Intellect to Perceive Spiritual Realities

"Thanks be to God who guided us on the right path for we would have never walked the straight path if He

1. Q. XVIII: 5
2. *Maktūbāt*, Vol. III, No. 23 to Khwāja Ibrāhīm Qabādyāni

had Himself not provided us guidance. Verily, the prophets of God came with truth. How can we express our gratitude to God for sending His messengers to us; how can we truly affirm our trust in the greatest Benefactor and how can we find the strength to be good and virtuous in order to render our thanks to Him? Had these blessed souls not been sent to us, who would have helped us to comprehend the existence and Unity of the Maker of heavens and earth? The Greek philosophers of antiquity, though sharp-witted, could not find their way to the existence of the Creator of this universe and attributed the origin of things to *dahr* (time). As the prophetic call gradually became stronger, the later philosophers rejected the propositions of their ancient predecessors and affirmed the existence as well Unity of the Creator. This, in itself, shows that our intellect is helpless in this matter and our understanding would remain deficient without prophetic help."[1]

Prophethood transcends Intellect and Discursive Reasoning

"Prophethood transcends intellect and the methods of reasoning. Matters which are beyond the ken of intellect or human perception are proved by the prophetic method. Had human intellect been sufficient to show light of guidance to man, there would have been no need for God to send His apostles (peace be on all of them), nor the chastisement in the hereafter would have been prescribed as punishment for rejecting them. God tells us: *We never punish until we have sent a messenger.*[2] Reason furnishes a proof, no doubt, but its testimony is neither final nor perfect. Authenticated attestation is provided only by prophethood after which there remains nothing more to

1. *Maktūbāt*, Vol. I, No. 259 to Khwājā Muhammad Sa'eed
2. Q. XVII: 15

be searched for. In the words of God these are the '*messengers of good cheer and warning, in order that mankind might have no argument against Allah after the messengers. Allah was ever Mighty, Wise.*'[1] For the inadequacy of reflective power to comprehend certain matters has been an established fact, it would be fallacious to weigh all the commandments of the *sharī'ah* in its scale; to make the *sharī'ah* concordant with the judgement of intellect would amount to denial of the prophethood. We seek the refuge of God from it."[2]

Pure Intellect is a Myth

The writ of philosophy reigned supreme throughout the world, and specially in Irān and India, during the tenth century (sixteenth century A.D.) which leaned heavily upon the Greek philosophy. Plato and Aristotle were taken as the two infallible masters of logic and philosophy; anything established through Aristotelian logic or simply the citation of these masters in one's support was enough to reduce one's adversary to silence. Mujaddid was the first Muslim thinker, as far as we are aware, who affirmed that the existence of pure and unmixed intellect completely detached from one's circumstances, current prejudices, ideas and theological origins or even one's predilections and sentiments was beyond the bounds of possibility. He demonstrated that the so-called pure intellect could not attain the knowledge of Truth in an objective manner even if it was assisted by inner enlightenment and self-purification for no one could ever claim to be completely emancipated from one's indwelling and extraneous impressions, training and instruction and the notions that had been ingrained as a part of one's intangible heritage of thought and feelings. His letters speak of his courage in enunciating

1. Q. IV : 165
2. *Maktūbāt*, Vol. III, No. 36 to Mīr Muhammad Nomān.

his proposition in an age when superiority of intellect and philosophic disquisitions through hypothesis and verification dominated the scene. His discovery was also striking which required a detailed examination for ascertaining its significance, yet it has perhaps still not been attempted by anybody.

It is a strange coincidence that after about two hundred years of the Mujaddid's findings on this subject, the famous German philosopher Immanuel Kant (1724—18C4) inaugurated a new era in philosophical speculation by adopting a critical method for examining the working of reasoning faculty and the nature of pure or abstract intellect. His great work, the *Critique of Pure Reason*, published in 1781, dealt a death blow to speculative dogmatism. In the words of Sir Muhammad Iqbal the *Critique of Pure Reason* revealed "the limitation of human reason and reduced the whole work of the rationalists to a heap of ruins."[1] Glowing tributes have been paid to this achievement of the western thought: some have even acclaimed Kant as the greatest blessing of God for the German nation. Dr. Harold Hoffding writes in the *History of Modern Philosophy* that Kant's Critique is "an immortal masterpiece of philosophy, a work which stands as a milestone in the long wanderings of human thought."[2]

In Kant's view, "thought sets to work *dogmatically*, i.e., with involuntary, frequently naive, confidence in its own powers and in the vitality of its own assumption. Hence it believes itself able to solve all problems and to penetrate to the innermost nature of the world. This is the age of great systems. Later comes a time in which it appears that these thought-constructions cannot reach the heavens, and that the architects cannot agree as to their plan. This is the age of doubt, of *scepticism*.

1. Dr. Muhammad Iqbal, *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*, Delhi, 1975, p. 5
2. Dr. Harold Hoffding, *A History of Modern Philosophy*, Vol. II, (London, 1935), p. 37

Men mock at these futile attempts with their contradictions, and console themselves half sadly, half cynically, with what appears to be an absolutely negative result. This is a natural reaction against blind dogmatism. Kant attacks both these tendencies. He found one task which had been neglected by dogmatists and sceptics alike, i.e., the enquiry into the nature of our intellect and our knowledge itself, with a view to discovering what forms and powers we have at our disposal for the comprehension of things, and how far these forms and powers can take us."[1]

Let us now turn to the Muslim scholar and thinker preceding western rationalism by several centuries who was brought up in the limited and traditional pedagogic atmosphere of India and who preferred to pursue the religious disciplines instead of applying his mind to liberal pursuits of logic and philosophy. Avoiding the pedantic jargon of philosophy, he explained the limits of intellect in an easy and simple language. The Mujaddid raises the question: Intellect being imperfect and inadequate to attain the gnosis of Ultimate Reality, why can it not create a link for the vision of the sought-for Truth with the help of self-purification and the unveiling of the inner spirit so as to achieve an understanding of divine knowledge and His commands for which we need prophethood and the angelic intermedium?

Then answering this question he writes:

> "Whatever connecting link and cohesion is created by intellect with the Divine Principle, its affiliation with the bodily existence can never be severed completely nor can it achieve complete freedom by tearing apart its cementation with the corporeal body. Doubt remains yoked to it; imagination is fastened to its thoughts; anger and desire are blended with it; greed and avarice are its constant companions; while human shortcomings like forgetfulness, faultiness and misjudgement never part company with it.

1. Dr. Harold Hoffding, *A History of Modern Philosophy*, Vol. II, p. 30

Thus, Intellect cannot be relied upon and its findings are not impervious to its doubtfulness, immaturity and imagination. Nor can they be considered free of its misjudgements and miscalculations. Contrarily, the angels are unhampered by these handicaps and, therefore, reliance can be placed on them. The knowledge transmitted by them is unencumbered by the mixture of human imagination, doubt and mistake. Sometimes it so happens that the spirit apprehends the Divine Principle through its internal experience but certain postulates and *a priori* principle mistakenly taken as correct by the mental operations of the brain, get mixed up with such apprehensions without making the mystic aware of their contamination. Another time, one is able to make a distinction between the two; but very often one is denied that privilege. However, the admixture of these extraneous matters in the spiritual experiences makes them essentially uncertain and inaccurate which cannot be depended upon."[1]

Neo-Platonists and Illuminists

Illumination of the spirit has been regarded as an unerring and dependable source of acquiring knowledge and certitude, regulation of ethical conduct, purification of the self and creation of a just social order. Egypt and India were its two great centres in antiquity. This school of thought owes its popularity to the reaction against excessive intellectualism and the resultant carnalmindedness which was first set afloat in Greece and Rome but later on flourished at Alexandria, the great converging centre of eastern and western thoughts and religions. The propagators of this school claimed that the most important source of acquiring knowledge and certitude was spiritual perception which could be developed by inner illumination, self-purification and contemplation. It helped to

1. *Maktūbāt*, Vol. I, No. 266 to Khwājā 'Abdullah and Khwājā 'Ubaid Ullah.

acquire, according to them, Pure Intellect which created a direct connection between man and the world-soul through an inner perception of the Reality.

This principle pre-supposes the existence of an additional internal faculty, in addition to the five human senses, which can be quickened to perceive luminant objects, sounds and facts not perceived through the five senses. But there is nothing to warrant the supposition that this additional sense is not limited like the other outward senses or that it cannot commit mistakes like them in its apprehensions. Had this additional sense been unerring, its findings would have been free from contrasts and contradictions; nor there would have been any possibility of doubt or uncertainty in its perceptions. However, the history of theosophy bears a witness to the fact that the perception of the theosophists are as much inconsistent and conflicting as the speculative thoughts of Greek philosophers or other eastern rationalists. Aside from mysticism of the old whose history is mixed up with legends, let us take the example of conflicting beliefs and religious practices of neo-Platonist precursors. Plotinus (A. D. 203—262) was a free-thinker who rejected the religious beliefs and rituals of his time and laid emphasis on contemplation and meditation instead of devotional exercises. His disciple, Porphyry (A. D. 233—305) was, however, a moralist and a mystic. Porphyry believed in the re-birth of human soul in the shape of animals but Plotinus rejected that idea. Proclus (A. D. 412—485) was another celebrated teacher of neo-Platonic school. He punctually observed the then Egyptian religious devotions, and the reverence with which he honoured the sun and moon were unbounded. Yet, all the three believed in the inner spiritual perception of the Truth.[1]

The ecstatic experiences of Muslim mystics having complete reliance on mysticism and its capacity to reveal spiritual truths

1. See 'Neo-Platonism' in the *Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics*.

beyond common understanding, also show numerous inconsistencies like other theosophists. We find one mystic contradicting the exalted preception of the other experienced during an ecstatic transport, condemning it as intoxication (*sukr*) or insanity of experience (*ghalba-i-hāl*). The intellections having no extrinsic existence save in the minds and works of the philosophers are often reported to shake hands with those mystics who acknowledge the existence of hierarchical Intellects. The history of mysticism is replete with similar examples.

Shaikhul Ishrāq Shihāb-ud-dīn Suhrawardī

Shaikh Shihāb-ud-dīn Yahyā Suhrawardī (549-587 A.H.)[1] also known as Shaikh-ul-Ishrāq (Master of Illumination) and the *maqtūl* (executed)[2] achieved considerable renown among the Muslim mystics of 6th/12th century. He was executed under the orders of Al-Malik-ul-Zāhir in 587/1191 for holding heterodox views which ran counter to the accepted creed of Islam. Suhrawardī declared himself a peripatetic and a sufi. "One finds in Suhrawardī alongwith peripatetic ideas", writes S. V. Den Bergh, "all that mystic philosophy...obtained from Hellenistic syncretism, all the mixture of neo-Platonic doctrines, Hermetic theories, occult sciences, Gnostic traditions and neo-Pythagorean elements". According to Bergh, who contributed the article on Suhrawadī in the *Encyclopedia of Islam*, the cornerstone of his philosophy of *ishrāq* (illumination) was really borrowed from the neo-Platonic view of light which was regarded as the fundamental reality of things.[3]

Shams-ud-dīn Muhammad al-Shahrzūri writes that Suhrawardī mixed up speculative philosophy with gnostic theosophy. His most important work was the *Hikmat-il-Ishrāq* on which

1. A.D. 1154-1191
2. This distinguishes him from the martyr or *shahid*, because of his heretical views.
3. *Encyclopedia of Islam*, Vol. IV, *Art.* Suhrawardī, Shihāb-ud-dīn.

the commentary written by Qutb-ud-dīn Shīrāzī as *Sharh Hikmat--il-Israq* achieved considerable popularity in the educational and intellectual circles.

Suhrawardī holds that the intellections are not limited to ten for there is an Intellect for each and every species. He gives them the name of *anwār-i-mujarradah* or abstract illuminations. Each abstract illumination stands guard over its particular species. The sky is a living creature, according to Suhrawardī, and hence it has an abstract soul which brings it into motion. The sky, which is protected against change and disintegration, possesses the sentient soul (*al-nafs al-nātiqah*) and therefore it is in possession of other senses also. The sky is even a sentient being according to Suhrawardī. The Absolute Light casts its effect on everything through the stars and this causes motion in human faculties. The largest among the stars is sun which is paid a reverential regard by the illuminists. The cosmos is, by itself and through several intermediaries, governed by Absolute Light whereby it is manifested and brings all things into existence. Heat and motion are generated by light and thus fire is the greatest repository of both the attributes and elements. Just as the *nafs* (soul) illuminates the *'ālam-i-arwāh* (world of spirits), fire illuminates the *'ālam-i-ajsām* (corporeal world). God has appointed a vicegerent for every world; in the world of intellections it is the First Intellect; in the celestial world these are the stars and their souls; in the world of elements it consists of the human soul, while the radiations of the stars and fire, in particular, plan and manage the affairs of the world. *Khilāfat-i-kubrā* or the greater vicegerency is allotted to the perfect souls of the prophets while the *khilāfat-i-sughrā* i.e., the lesser vicegerency belongs to fire since it deputises for the sublime light and the rays of the stars during the night and causes foodstuff and other vegetations to ripen. Suhrawardī held the world to be uncreated and time to be eternal and everlasting. The transmigration of soul was neither affirmed

nor rejected by him since he did not find the arguments for and against that proposition sufficiently adequate to clinch the issue.[1]

This was the illustrious man of intellect known to the east as Master of Illumination. His intelligence, depth of knowledge and piety were recognised by his contemporaries but his mysticism alongwith self-purification, meditation and contemplation could not unmask the fallacies of the Greek and Magian philosophastry. He abjured the knowledge of Truth as well as the message of good cheer for this world and the next, brought by the last of the prophets, opted for an unbalanced, discomposed aud unsuccessful life and departed from the world without leaving any guidance or direction for the social good of the humanity.

Similarity of Intellect and Spiritual Illumination

Kant suspected the existence of pure intellect and set forth evidence to show that it could neither be unmixed nor emancipated from subjective and non-subjective experiences and impressions. Yet, being uninitiated with the world of spirit, he could not go beyond the intellect. The Mujaddid, on the other hand, was no stranger to the interior experiences of spirit and therefore he had no difficulty in making a headway to the esoteric plane. He demonstrated that the existence of pure or infallible spiritual illumination and inspiration were almost impossible. He afforded proof that the effort to attain the knowledge of Ultimate Reality with the help of self-purification and illumination of the spirit was nothing more than an attempt to attain the impossible. The facts of mute reality pertaining to the world beyond the range of human perception can be known by all, the elite and the commoner, through the apostles

1. For a detailed description see the *Hukamā'l Islām*, Vol. II, by 'Abdus Salām Nadwi.

of God who are sent, in reality, for guiding the people to the knowledge of Truth and the path of virtue as well as for purification of morals and spirits necessary for salvation in the hereafter.

Let us now turn to letters of the Mujaddid on this subject:

"These unwise sages (*hukamā*) took to penance and prayer following the lead of the illuminists and rejected the teachings of the prophets. They relied on purification of the self and fanciful ecstatic experiences: they went astray and seduced others. They were not aware that their self-purification really led to waywardness; it was different from the purification of heart which guides one to the right path. For the purification of heart depends upon the way of the prophets, the purification of self is a necessary outcome of the purification of heart—provided the heart is allowed to guide the self. The heart alone is capable of manifesting divine illumination. The purified self without cleansing of the heart is like a lamp lighted to allow ingress to one's surreptitious enemy or Satan bent upon to devastate one's house.

"In short, devotions and vigils produce the conviction and absolute trust only when they are ratified by the prophets (peace be on them) who preach the message of God. Succour of God comes to the aid of the prophets. The system of apostleship enjoys the protection of angels who are themselves shielded against the intrigues of a furtive enemy like Satan. God says about them: *Lo! as for My slaves; thou hast no power over any of them.*"[1] This protection is not afforded to others nor can one guard oneself against the accursed Satan unless one follows in the footsteps of the noble prophets. S'adī has truly said that the path of peace and virtue cannot be found without following the lead of Muhammad, on whom be peace and blessings of

1. Q. XV:42

God, and his progeny and all the prophets be blessed by God."[1]

Impurities in Ecstatic Experiences

"One must understand that the ecstatic experiences are not misled by satanic suggestions alone. It sometimes happens that figmental and fanciful notions are stored in one's mind; Satan has no access to the quarters where they are stored; yet they come out of the sub-conscious symbolised in a human form. This is how certain persons who claim to have a vision of the Prophet attribute things to him not permitted by the *shari'ah*. Such cases cannot be regarded as inspirations from Satan since he cannot appear, according to the scholars, in the shape of the holy Prophet. These cases represent creations of the brain which mislead certain persons to take something for granted although they have no basis for it."[2]

In another letter he writes:

"Even if a soul is converted through self-purification into a wholly contented soul (*nafs-i-mutma'yinnah*) it cannot be completely expurgated of its inherent characteristics with the result that mistaken notions can find a way into it."[3]

Conflict between the teachings of Philosophers and Prophets

Shaikh Ahmad also points out the self-evident discordance between the teachings of the prophets and philosophers which has persisted for centuries since the two are irreconcilable. The brainworks of the philosophers are, in his view, nothing more than lashing the waves. He says:

"The imperfect intellect of the philosophers is completely at variance with that of the prophets in conceiving

1. *Maktūbāt*, Vol. III, No. 34 to Khāwāja Ibrāhīm Qabādyānī
2. *Maktūbāt*, Vol. III, No. 107 to Muhammad Sādiq of Kashmīr
3. *Ibid.*, Vol. II, No. 41 to Shaikh Durwaysh

the genesis of the world and the hereafter. Their deliberations and discussions clash with the teachings of the prophets; they have no faith in the afterlife and think that the world is uncreated although there is a consensus among all the religions that it is contingent. Similarly, they are not convinced that on the Doomsday the sky will be rent asunder, stars will be blown up, mountains will split into pieces and the oceans will overflow as foretold by God; nor do they believe that all human beings will be revived again on that Day. They deny the events specified in the Qur'ān. The philosophers of the later times confess that they are Muslims, but they are also wedded to these very philosophical doctrines. They are convinced that the sky and the stars and similar other things are eternal which will never come to naught. Their food for thought consists of the denial of Quranic teachings and rejection of the religious creed. What sort of believers they are who affirm their faith in God and His apostles yet reject everything taught by them. There can hardly be anything more idiotic than this. A poet made a correct assessment of philosophy when he said that since it involved sophistry, the whole of it represented fallacious reasoning.

"The philosophers had devoted their whole lives to mastering the principles of logic or correct use of reasoning so as to save themselves from committing mistakes. They took great pains in learning these principles but the moment they started applying their mind to the nature and attributes of the Ultimate Reality, they gave up the science of reasoning and began beating about the bush. They have gone astray like the man who kept himself busy in amassing the munitions of war for long years but lost his heart as soon as the conflict started.

"These are the people who consider philosophy to be very systematic and methodical discipline, accurate and

faultless. Even if their claim were accepted, it would be true only in the case of those sciences for which intellectual capacity alone is sufficient to comprehend the matter under enquiry. But this is not the case here. This science is neither relevant nor useful to the issues like everlasting afterlife or salvation in the hereafter. Here we mean the knowledge that cannot he reached through intellect; this knowledge is assuredly dependent on the prophetic way and on it rests the final salvation......Logic is a device helpful to other discursive sciences, showing an infallible way to the correct method of reasoning. But it was of no help to them in finding the Ultimate Truth. How can this science help others when it has already failed these persons? One ought to entreat God:

> *"Our Lord! Suffer not our hearts to deviate after Thou hast guided us, and bestow on us from Thine presence mercy. Verily Thou; ! Thou art the Bestower."*[1]

"Those who are half-learned in philosophy are not unoften misguided by its sophism and take the philsophers as the seers and sages and contenders of the prophets of God. Some of them would be willing even to give preference to the postulates of the philosophers, no matter whether they be incorrect, over the commandments of God expounded by the prophets, who may all be blessed by God. May God save us from such misguided beliefs. Thus, all those who consider the philosophers as men of intellect and their formulations as wisdom are necessarily led astray. For wisdom consists of the knowledge of reality of things, this misguided lot rejects the knowledge of truth brought by the prophets simply because it is in conflict with the comprehensions of the philosophers.

"In brief, the acceptance of philosophers and their rationalisations amount to rejection of the prophets and

1. Q. III : 8

their teachings. This is because the philosophers and apostles of God are diametrically opposed to each other; acceptance of one presupposes the rejection of the other. Now, it is open to everyone to have faith in the prophets and become a believer and one of those who are saved or to join the company of the philosophers and consort with the devil, accursed and condemned. Says the Lord of the world:

> "*Then whosoever will, let him believe, and whosoever will, let him disbelieve. Lo! We have prepared for disbelievers Fire. Its tent encloseth them. If they ask for showers, they will be showered with water like to molten lead which burneth the faces. Calamitous the drink and ill the resting-place!*"[1]

"Peace be on him who followed the guidance and the example of Holy Prophet. Peace and blessings be also on Muhammad and other prophets and the angels of God."[2]

Purification Unattainable without Prophethood

"That the purification and embellishment of soul proceed from the divinely approved virtuous deeds, they ultimately depend on prophecy. Thus the gist of purification and freedom from evil cannot be had by any one without the help of the prophets."[3]

Indispensability of the Prophets

Shaikh Ahmad considers the prophets indispensable for guidance of humanity. Human intellect is, in his view, inadequate to lead man to the divine presence. He writes in a letter

1. Q. XVIII : 30
2. *Maktūbāt*, Vol. III, No. 23, addressed to Khwāja Ibrāhim Qabādyānī
3. *Ibid.* Vol. I, No. 266, addressed to Khwāja 'Abdullah and Khwāja 'Ubaid Ullah.

addressed to Khwājā 'Abdullah and Khwājā 'Ubaid Ullah.

"Apostleship is a blessing for mankind; for, without their assistance who could have enlightened it about the nature and attributes of God and made it to see the difference between the evil and the virtue? Our limited understanding is incapable of penetrating the Truth without the help of the prophets, nor it is able to find the path of virtue save by following their example.

"Intellect is no doubt verificative but it cannot provide absolute certainty nor its trustworthiness is incontestable. Absolute certainty is reached only through the prophets of God (on whom be peace); and on them depends eternal perdition and everlasting salvation."[1]

Divine Knowledge and Prophecy

"Prophethood is a blessing because it is through the prophets alone that man can approach the Divine Person, His nature and attributes, which comprise the source of all the excellence and grace of this world and the next. Prophethood imparts us the understanding of things agreeable and unsuited to His Sublime Existence. Since our limited and inadequate intellect is contingent and created, it has no comprehension of the uncreated First Principle nor it is aware of the attributes that are either becoming or unbecoming to it. Rather, the indequacy of Intellect often misleads one to attribute perfection to something deficient or to do just the other way round. The ability to distinguish between the two is to me the greatest of all internal and external gifts bestowed on man. Thus, unblest is the man who ascribes unseemly acts and objects to God's Exalted Person. It was prophethood which drew a line of demarcation between the truth and untruth and distinguished between what was fit to be paid divine rever-

1. *Maktūbāt*, Vol. I, No. 266

ence and what was unfit for it. The apostles of God invite mankind to the Divine path because of prophethood which enables them to attain propinquity with Him. And, as already explained, the prophethood makes man aware of the commandments of God and gives the discernment of the permissible and impermissible, Likewise, there are many more gifts of prophethood which go to prove its blessedness. Prophethood loses none of its merits nor there is any blame on it if any one misguided by his carnal desires decides to follow the accursed Satan or rejects the teachings of the prophets."[1]

Gnosis of God : A Gift of Prophethood

"As the call and message of the prophets came to be known to the world through their continued preaching; even the ignoramuses doubting the existence of the Creator realised their mistake and found credence. Their acceptance of God as the Creator of all things and beings was brought about by the light and knowledge spread by the God's massengers. Peace and blessings of God be on them forever and aye.

"All the knowledge that has reached us through the prophets, as, for example, the perfection of the Divine Person and His attributes, prophethood, impeccability of the angels, retribution on the Day of reckoning, heaven and hell, the perpetual bliss of paradise, everlasting perdition of the hell and similar other matters spoken of by the *sharī'ah*, could have never been discovered by the human intellect. It was, in reality, incapable of proving the truth of these grim realities by itself without the assistance of the prophets of God."[2]

1. *Maktūbāt*, Vol. I, No. 266, addressed to Khwājā 'Abdullāh and 'Ubaid Ullah.
2. *Maktūbāt*, Vol. III, No. 23, addressed to Khwājā Ibrāhīm Qabādyārī.

Stages of Faith

"First of all one should have faith in God's apostles and repose confidence in prophethood so that the heart is cleansed of darkness and articles of faith take hold of the mind. This is the fundamental principle of faith on which one should be firm and steadfast in order that one is able to put his trust in other dogmas and precepts of the creed. No system of belief can be made acceptable to anyone without first creating a trust in the core of that system.

"The easiest way to find credence and heart-felt conviction is the recollection of God. *Lo! in the remembrance of Allah hearts do find rest! Those who believe and do right: Joy for them, and a happy resort.*[1]

"A poet has correctly expressed this truth in these words:

"The logician stands on wooden legs,
But weak and unstable are the legs of wood."[2]

Acceptance of Prophethood based on Sound Reasoning

"One who follows the prophets after having satisfied oneself of the truth of prophethood really takes one's stand upon sound reasoning. Even his acceptance of the teachings of the prophets without asking for any confirmatory evidence is based on reason. It is like proving a major premiss with cogent arguments which validates the minor premiss on the same grounds. *Praise be to Allah, who has guided us to this. We could not truly have been led aright if Allah had not guided us. Verily the messengers of our Lord did bring the Truth.*"[3]

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1. Q. XIII: 28-29
2. *Maktūbāt*, Vol. III, No. 36, addressed to Mīr Muhammad N'omān.
3. Q. VII: 43, (*Ibid.*)

Prophetic Teachings not Verifiable by Intellect

"Verily the requital, balance and the path (to hell) are indisputable facts because the information about them was brought by the one most truthful. Denial of their existence by those who are ignorant of the station of prophethood is untenable because perception of the prophets goes beyond the ken of intellect. An attempt to verify the information brought by the prophets through the touchstone of intellect is, in fact, a denial of prophethood. These matters (of metaphysical reality) have to be accepted without any argumentation."[1]

Beyond Intellect and Irrationality

It should not be presumed that the prophetic procedure is irrational. On the contrary, the line of action adopted by intellect cannot approach the Divine Person without following the lead of the prophets. To be against reason or intellect is something quite different from that which cannot be comprised by intellect. Irrationality of any thought can be judged only after the intellect has comprehended its nature."[2]

Method of Worship taught by Prophets alone

"For the prophets provide guidance in the matter of thanksgiving to the Great Benefactor and teach man how to pay homage to Him in the way He desires, one cannot do without God's messengers. Divine service not performed in accordance with the direction given by Him is unbecoming of His great Majesty and Power but the faculties endowed to man are incapable of finding out its correct method. As man can even commit the mistake of being

1. *Maktūbāt*, Vol. I, No. 266 addressed to Khwājā 'Abdullah and Khwājā 'Ubaid Ullah.
2. *Ibid.*

disrespectful in place of returning Him thanks, it becomes the duty of the prophets to let man know how to lift up his heart in adoration of God. The inspirations of the saintly persons are also drawn from the prophets on whose imitation depend all the blessings and divine grace dispensed to them."[1]

Prophethod Superior to Intellect

"Intellect occupies a position higher to senses because it can comprehend things not perceived by the senses. In a similar manner prophethood is superior in position and quality to the intellect since it can discern things not apprehended by the latter. Anyone who does not recognise any other means for acquisition of knowledge save intellect really denies the prophetic medium and the guidance made available through it."[2]

Station of Prophethood

Studious devotion of the scholars to Greek sciences and philosophy which were devoid of prophetic light yet regarded as the very essence of knowledge, on the one hand, and diligent engagement of the mystics in travails, vigils and penance uninformed by the *kitab* and the *sunnah*, on the other, since the beginning of the eighth century after Hijrah, had given rise to a callous neglect or rather mental alienation from prophethood among the commonality. The lives of God's messengers including that of the last Prophet were looked down upon by the philosophers and theosophists as the profiles of common men who had spent their lives in a conventional manner; who had wives and children, earned their living as traders or by tending flocks, took part in battles and expressed their joys and sorrows in a familar way; who did not engage themselves in the so-called

1. *Maktūbāt*, Vol. III, No. 23, addressed to Khwājā Ibrāhīm Qabādyānī
2. *Ibid.*

meritious devotional exercises meant for self-mortification as undertaken even by the ordinary mystics; and who paid greater attention to teaching and preaching to others rather than to the prefection of their own souls. The mystics of the day brought up in the neo-Platonist lore of spiritual states and ecstasy, clairvoyant illumination and union with the Divine Person as well as enamoured of a fascination for miraculous powers and hidden essence had come to hold the misconceived notion that since the preachings of God's message required diversion of attention from the mystic discipline, those who were perpetually engrossed in the perfection of spirit were on a higher plane than the prophets of God. Some, who were a bit more cautious in this regard, had propounded the view that sainthood was by itself not superior to prophethood but what they actually meant by it was that the state of sainthood was generally superior to pursuits of prophethood. They held that the prophets in communion with God were at a higher level than at *the moment* when they occupied themselves in their preaching mission. All these thoughts indicated the hold of misguided mysticism in the religious circles which was, in the final analysis, alienating the community of the believers from its original sources of prophethood and the *sharī'ah.* This was a great menace facing the Muslims which had to be encountered by the religious scholars, for they were the deputies of the prophets and were charged with the duty of reviving the spirit of true faith in the community.

Shaikh Sharaf-ud-din Yahyā Maneri (661-786 A.H.)[1] was perhaps the first mystic endowed with esoteric spiritual knowledge who had forcefully rejected this proposition in his letters.[2] He asserted that even the shortest spell of a prophet's life was infinitely superior than the entire life of any mystic or gnostic. The corporeal body of the prophets, he had maintained, could be compared with the head and heart of the most sublime mystic in a state of propinquity to God.

1. A.D. 1263-1384
2. See Saviours of Islamic Spirit, Vol. II.

The Mujaddid was the only luminary after Shaikh Sharaf-ud-dīn Yahyā Maneri who grasped this truth and demonstrated that the prophets were intellectually and spiritually the acme of spiritual perfection among the entire creation of God. He explained that their spiritual affinity with God was never severed by their diversion of attention to any matter whatsoever because their responsive hearts were opened by God to the secrets of truth and reality. This was a characteristic singular to them since the great task with which they were charged required brilliance and alertness of mind along with largeheartedness and fortitude not possessed by the illuminists and ecstatics. The prophets of God made the start where mystics and saints ended their journey of spirit; the former enjoyed nearness of God by virtue of the performance of duties allotted to them whereas the latter strived to approach it through voluntary devotions and prayers but could never attain that stage. The perfection of sainthood as compared to the quintessence of prophethood was like a drop beside the ocean. The extracts from Shaikh Ahmad's letters which follow indicate something of the sublimity and originality of his thought.

Prophets are the Best of Creations

"The prophets are the best of creations, endowed with the finest qualities. Sainthood is a fraction of what prophethood represents as a whole; the prophethood is thus by definition superior to sainthood. It follows from it that whether it be the sainthood of a prophet or a saint, the *sahw* (sobriety) surpasses *sukr* (intoxication). *Sahw* embodies *sukr* in the same way as prophethood encompasses sainthood. As for the alertness and wakefulness of the commonality, it is a sobriety of the plebeian type without any claim to primacy. But the sobriety which is inclusive of intoxication, does enjoy a pre-eminence over the latter. The knowledge pertaining to the *sharī'ah* whose fountainhead is prophethood, qualifies to be called *sahw* (sobriety);

everything that comes in conflict with the *sharī'ah* is *sukr* (intoxication). Those who are in an intoxicated state are rendered incompetent and so only the knowledge pertaining to sobriety deserves to be followed and not that dependent on intoxication."[1]

Openheartedness of the prophets

"Certain mystics transported upon the wings of intoxicated fervour have made the remark that the sainthood is better than prophethood. Others have, however, explained it as referring to the saintly aspect of the prophets so as to repudiate the absolute superiority of saints over the prophets. The fact, in any case, is just the reverse of it. The prophetic aspect of the apostles of God surpasses their sainthood. The saints being narrowhearted cannot devote their full attenion to their fellow beings while the concern of the prophets for human beings does not cause any obstruction to their absorbed attention to the Divine Beings. Nor their engrossment in God causes any difficulty in applying their mind to God's creations. The truth is that the prophets never devote their thoughts entirely to human beings in a way that the saints can claim any advantage over them. I take refuge in Allah, praise be to Him; undivided attention is the characteristic of common people while the prophets occupy a pre-eminently higher position than them. Those who are intoxicated by mystical fervour cannot understand the underlying reality of this assertion: it can verily be comprehended only by the gnostics who have attained the state of sobriety."[2]

Dual Attention of Prophets

"Some of the mystics who are more inclined to

1. *Maktūbāt*, Vol. I, No. 95 to Saiyid Ahmad of Bijwāda.
2. *Maktūbāt*, Vol. I, No. 108 to Saiyid Ahmad of Bijwāda.

remain in the state of mystical intoxication, give preference to their spiritual mood over prophetic instruction for the latter is disposed to sobriety. One of such ecstatic utterances holds that the sainthood is superior to prophethood. The reason given is that while the sainthood has its attention fixed on God, prophethood applies its mind to human beings. Undoubtedly the engrossment in God is better than absorption in His creations and that is why certain people explain these utterances as referring to the superiority of the saintly aspect of the prophets over their prophetic integral.

"Such specious reasonings appear unwarranted to me. This is because prophethood does not keep itself absorbed exclusively in the thought of created beings. Anyone occupying the exalted position of prophethood has his innermost thoughts fixed on God while outwardly he applies himself to the human beings. If any one gives undivided attention to the human beings, he is more of a politician or an unenlightened man than a prophet."[1]

Comparison between Saints and Prophets

"It is meaningless to say that the end of prophethood is the beginning of sainthood; this assertion would be senseless even if those who hold this view interpret the end of prophethood and the beginning of sainthood as the realisation of *sharī'ah*. They argue in this manner, against a fact self-evident, because they are not aware of the reality. These truths have not been explained by anyone. There are even persons who controvert this fact as if it were something incomprehensible, but every man who is just and cognizant of the exalted position of prophets and grandeur of the *sharī'ah*, can himself verify this subtle

1. *Maktūbāt*, Vol. I, No. 95, addressed to Saiyid Ahmad of Bijwāda.

and salient truth and thereby increase his faith in it."[1]

Prophetic Appeal meant for Heart

"Hark ye! my son, the prophets (on whom be peace and blessings) direct their call to the *'ālam-i-khalq* (world of creation). It is related on the authority of Prophet's Traditions that Islam is based on five things (i. e., acceptance of the Unity of God, prayer, fasting, poor-due and *haj*). Inasmuch as the heart of man is inclined towards the *'ālam-i-khalq*, it is invited to give faith to these fundamentals. All that is beyond the ken of the heart has neither been discussed nor reckoned as a part of the fundamentals of faith nor one is required to place his trust in them. Mark that the blessings of paradise, torments of hell, vision of the Divine Being and its denial pertain to the *'ālam-i-khalq*. These have nothing to do with the *'ālam-i-amr* (world of commands.)"[2]

Emulation of the Prophets rewarded by Proximity to God

"Similarly, the performance of obligatory, necessary and recommendatory acts are related to corporeal body belonging to the *'ālam-i-khalq* (world of creation). Acts of superoragation on the other hand, belong to the (*ālam-i-amr*) world of command. The divine proximity attained by the performance of all these acts depends on the nature of these actions. This means that the reward of obligatory acts is connected with the 'world of creation' and that of superoragatory acts concerns the 'world of commands'. There is hardly any doubt that the superoragatory acts are not comparable to the dutious obligations. The former are like a drop in the ocean as compared to dutious obligations, for these are the acts that are known as recommenda-

1. *Maktūbāt*, Vol. I, No. 260, addressed to Shaikh Muhammad Sādiq.
2. *Ibid.*

tory by virtue of their being taken after the Prophet's example. Similarly anything recommended by a prophet is like a drop when compared to an act made obligatory through a divine command which is something resembling a water course. This analogy demonstrates the worth and merit of different types of actions as well as the superiority of the 'world of creation' over the 'world of command'."[1]

Excellence of Prophethood surpasses Sainthood

"God has made clear to this poorling that the virtues of sainthood as compared to the merits of prophethood are unworthy of any regard. They are not even a drop in the ocean if placed beside the prophetic virtues. Thus the grace and goodliness achieved through the way of the prophets is many times more than that can be had through sainthood and this shows the absolute superiority of the prophets of God. Even the angels of God occupy a place somewhat higher than the saints according to the consensus of a majority of scholars.

"All this goes to show that no saint can attain the merits of a prophet, or, to put it in another way, the head of the most virtuous saint would be beneath the feet of a prophet."[2]

Scholars are on the Right Path

"If you make a close study of the matters about which there is a dispute between the scholars and the mystics, you would find the former holding the ring of truth. The reason is that the scholars who follow the prophets are able to discern the merits and wisdom of prophethood while the mystics with their gaze fixed on the virtues of

1. *Maktūbāt*, Vol. I, No. 260, addressed to Shaikh Muhammad Sādiq.
2. *Maktūbāt*, Vol. I, No. 266, addressed to Khwājā 'Ubaid Ullah and Khwājā 'Abdullah

saints cannot go beyond the limited sphere of esoteric spiritual knowledge. Consequently, the knowledge gained through prophetic light is more accurate and valid than that can be had through spiritual perfection."[1]

"This humble self has already explained in his writings and letters that the merits of prophethood are similar to an ocean in comparison to a drop of spiritual perfection possessed by the saints. Yet, there are persons who cannot comprehend the reality of prophethood and hold that the sainthood is superior to prophethood. Others have interpreted this maxim to mean that the saintly aspect of the prophets excels their prophetic integral. Both these groups have been misled because of their ignorance of the reality of prophethood. Similar is the case with those who prefer *sukr* (intoxication) to *sahw* (sobriety). Had they known the reality of *sahw* they would have never drawn a parallel between it and the *sukr*.

Not a bit alike is the earth to the mansions of sky.

"They have perhaps likened the *sahw* of the elite to the alertness and wakefulness of the commonality and thus given preference to *sukr* over it. They ought to have brought the *sukr* of the righteous in comparison with the drunkenness of the laity in arriving at this decision. For all the men of wisdom are unanimous in holding the view that sobriety is better than intoxication, there should be no difference in the matter whether *sukr* or *sahw* is used in an allegorical or a literal sense."[2]

Dignity of the Prophets

"It should be clearly understood that the apostles of God owe their dignity and solemnity to their prophethood and not to their saintliness. Sainthood is not a bit more

1. *Maktūbāt*, Vol. I, No. 268, addressed to Khān-i-Khānān
2. *Ibid.*

than a servant in attendance to a prophet. Had sainthood occupied a position superior to prophethood, the cherubim whose saintliness is assuredly more perfect than any saint would have taken precedence over the prophets. One of the misguided sects which held sainthood as superior to prophethood, was led to acknowledge the supremacy of the angels and consequently became a sect splintered from the *Ahl-i-Sunnat wal-Jam'āt.* This was, thus, the result of their ignorance of the reality of prophethood. I have dwelt here on this subject at some length because the distance of time separating the people from the era of last prophethood has made prophecy look like something subsidiary to sainthood in the eyes of certain persons. *Our Lord! Forgive us for our sins and wasted efforts, make our foothold sure, and give us victory over [the disbelieving folk.*[1]"

Faith in the Unseen

"Mīr Muhib Ullah should know that the faith in the Ultimate Cause and His Attributes appertains to the prophets and their companions. Those saintly men of God who give a call (to have faith in the Ultimate Reality) are like the companions of the prophets, although they are very few in number. The faith in the realities beyond the ken of human perception is also granted to the scholars and the believers, in general, while *imān-i-shuhūdī* (discernible faith) belongs generally to the mystics whether they are ascetics or not. Although the consociate mystics descend (from the pinnacle of spiritual heights), their descent is never complete since their inner self continues to be watchful of another glimpse of the Ultimate Reality. Outwardly they are with their comrades but inwardly they maintain

1. *Maktūbāt*, Vol. I, No. 268 to Khān-i-Khānān (Q. III : 147)

proximity to Divine Being and thus they are granted the *imān-i-shuhūdī*. The prophets of God who experience a complete descent concentrate entirely upon the mission of giving a call to the people, both inwardly and outwardly. The faith in the Hidden Reality thus really belongs to them (since they can fully maintain the faith in the Ultimate Reality even after their descent.)"[1]

Perfect Experience of the Ultimate Reality

"I have made out the point in some of my letters that being watchful of the higher regions after experiencing the descent signifies an imperfect ascent to the Ultimate Reality. This is a sign of deficient spiritual experience. The perfect descent, on the other hand, indicates perfection of ascent to the *Nihāyat-un-nihāyah* (Ultimate of the ultimate). The dual attention (to the Creator and the created) has been recognised by the *sufis* as the acme of spiritual perfection and the combination of *tashbīh* (integration) and *tanzīh* (abstraction) as the consummation of spiritual proficiency."[2]

Islamic Concept of Sufism

The method employed for attaining proximity to God and avoiding worldliness through perfection of morals, which later on came to be known as *tasawwuf* or mysticism, was identical with the *tazkiyah* (purification) and *ihsān* (sincere worship) in the Quranic and *hadīth* terminology. It was, in fact, one of the four objectives of the prophethood of Muhammad (peace be upon him) as explained in this verse of the Qur'ān :

"He it is who hath sent among the unlettered ones a messenger of their own, to recite unto them revelations and to purify them, and to teach them the Scripture and wisdom, though heretofore they were indeed in error manifest"[3]

1. *Maktūbāt*, Vol. I, No. 272 to Muhib Ullah of Mānikpūr.
2. *Ibid.*
3. Q. LXII: 2

The task of maintaining a judicious balance between the rituals and the spirit of religion, safeguarding the revelatory fountain to which the faithful returned again and again to refresh his spiritual vision was performed by the successors of the holy Prophet and the right-guided *'ulamā.* They took care to protect and develop not only the external frame of theological discipline of the Muslim society but also helped in promoting the spiritual health of its members which linked them with the intuitive consciousness of the Prophet. In the beginning the emphasis was more on the inner nature and vital principles of faith rather than on its amplification or finding new channels for its practical experience. However, with the expansion of Muslim rule over vast areas, accretion of great numbers of adherents of widely diverse spiritual and intellectual capacities and influx of wealth and riches and the means of comfort, new and embarrassing issues began to crop up which threatened to transform the religious thinking of the Muslim community. With the increasing distance of time from the days of the Holy Prophet the new ideas started posing problems in the shape of spiritual and moral infirmities or novel concepts and philosophies, as if, in accordance with the Quranic dictum: *And the term was prolonged for them, and so their hearts were hardened.* It was, then, with the increasing range of intellectual activity that the *tazkiyah* and *ihsān* were institutionalised under the name of *tasawwuf* (mysticism) into a spiritual discipline. Another development of a similar nature could be seen in the fields of Arabic grammer and rhetorics formerly grounded in the instinctive appreciation of the Arabic language by the indigenous people, which were stimulated by contact with the non-Arabs and then compiled into elaborate sciences complete with experts, schools of grammarians and their distinctive syllabuses, each of which attracted a large number of students desirous of learning all about these rules.

During the initial period of Islamic era the *tazkīyah* or *ihsān* or the method of spiritual purification with a deep and real

spiritual experience was based upon the concrete injunctions of the Qur'ān and the *sunnah* and on following the Holy Prophet's example. But, as the contact with the non-Arabs increased through their acceptance of Islam in large numbers, mysticism and gnosticism of the new converts to Islam stimulated mystical-ascetical attitudes in devotional exercises. Undue deference came to be paid to those admired as godly persons and a number of unauthorised rites and customs began to be introduced in those circles until some of the mystics accepted what could be called blatantly un-Islamic thoughts.

Trust in the philosophies professing to attain to the knowledge of God through spiritual ecstasy, direct intuition and excessive supplications gave birth to the view that earnest and assiduous devotions along with strict observance of all the obligatory and commendatory services enjoined by the *sharī'ah* and the *sunnah* helped in attaining a stage of knowledge which made a traveller of the path of spirit independent of the obligations of the *sharī'ah* meant for the common man. It was the stage known as *suqūt-i-taklīf* or cession of religious obligations. Those who entertained this belief adduced in their support the Quranic verse: "*And serve thy Lord till there cometh unto thee the conviction.*"[1] Yet, it was a mischievous doctrine destructive of the *sharī'ah* and the religious values of Islam, for it encouraged an attracted devotee to brush aside the divine services and mandatory obligations.

It seems that these innovations and aberrations had started emerging perceptibly from the beginning of the fourth century when the Abbaside power was at its zenith and the urban centres in the Muslim world were thriving as fleshpots of luxury and culture. The first book on *taswwuf* was *Kitāb-ul-Lum'a* written by Shaikh Abū Nasr Sarrāj (d. 378/988). A portion of this work is devoted to the methods of following

1. 'Certainty' according to a majority of commentators, means death in this verse.

the lead of the last Prophet (on whom be peace.)[1] Thereafter Saiyid 'Ali Hujwīrī (d.465/1072) warned in the *Kashf-ul-Mahjūb*[2] that 'attainment of reality was impossible without following the law.......mystic reality without law was hypocrisy'. Imām 'Abul Qāsim Qushayrī (d. 465/1072), a contemporary of Hujwīrī, wrote *Risālah Qushayriyah* which became the principal manual of mysticism. In it he laments the antinomian tendencies of the *sūfīs* of his time in these words:

> "Sanctity of the *sharī'ah* has fled from their hearts; indifference to religion has been taken by them as a course safe and dependable; they attach no importance to performance of devotions; and make little of prayers and fastings."[3]

The *Risālah Qushayriyah* opens with the emphasis on faithful adherence to the *sharī'ah* and then Qushayrī proceeds to illustrate his views by a series of brief biographies of the prominent *sūfīs* and saints of old who had faithfully complied with the dictates of the *sharī'ah* and followed the practice of the Prophet. In the last chapter of this book entitled 'Testament for the Disciples' Qushayrī writes that 'this affair (mystical enlightenment) depends upon adherence to religious laws.'

Among the religious scholars and mystics of a conspicuous sincerity, holiness and intuition upholding the supremacy of the *sharī'ah* Shaikh 'Abdul Qādir al-Jilānī occupies a distinguished place. His teaching was firmly based on the Qur'ān and Traditions; his life set an example of walking steadfastly on the straight path of the holy law as well as attaining a state of proximity to God. His *Ghuniyāt-ul-Tāibīn* consolidated

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1. *Kitāb ul-Lum'a*, London, 1914, pp. 93-104
2. The *Kash-ul-Mahjūb* by Abul Hasan 'Alī b. 'Uthmān b. Abī 'Alī al-Jullābī popularly known as Dātā Ganj Bakhsh, was translated into English by Dr. R. N. Nicholson (London, 1936). *His tomb still exists at* Lahore.
3. *Risālah Qushayriyah* (Cairo, 1319 A.H.), p.1

the bond of mysticism with the religious law of Islam. His other work, *Futūh-ul-Ghāib* lays emphasis on betaking the example of the Holy Prophet and avoiding every innovation in religious practices. The second lecture in this work opens with the exhortation: 'Follow the example of the Prophet and never give way to any innovation.' He occupied the place of a renovator of faith inasmuch as he delivered up the keys of *tasawwuf* to the *sharī'ah.* He commended that one should first observe what has been made obligatory by the *sharī'ah* and then comply with the *sunnah* and voluntary observances: performance of an act of secondary importance in place of the primary one was, by the same token, denounced by him as self-conceit and foolishness.

The *Awārif-ūl-Ma'ārif* by Shaikh Shihāb-ud-dīn Suhrawardī (d. 632/1234) was the most authoritative and popular compendium on mysticism which has ever since been esteemed as the principal study in the seminaries of the *sufīs.* The second part of this book expounds the secrets and wisdom of the *sharī'ah* and reckons *tasawwuf* as the means of "taking after the Prophet's example in speech, actions and bearings; for, the firmness of a *sufī* on this path sanctifies his soul, lifts the curtain lying over reality and enables him to follow the Prophet in the minutest detail."[1]

In the ninth century of Islamic era when mystical and gnostic currents were spreading out into the Muslim world with a lightning speed, Shaikh Muhyi-ud-dīn Ibn 'Arabī and his disciples transformed *tasawwuf* into a philosophical discipline and took over a number of symbols and terminologies pertaining to Hellenistic philosophy and metaphysics. *Wahdat-ul-Wujūd* (Unity of Being), accepted by them as the basic principle of sufism, came to be admired both in the *sufi* hospices and seats of learning. Indifference to the scripture and the *sunnah*

1. For a detailed description see *Tasawwuf-i-Islām* by 'Abdul Mājid Daryābādi.

coupled with unfamiliarity with the science of *hadīth* gave rise to a number of irreligious practices in the monasteries of the mystics which could neither be approved by fundamental theological thought of Islam nor was known to the earlier Muslims.

India had been a centre of *yoga* and asceticism for thousands of years. The Muslim mystics came into contact with the yogis who had developed their telepathic and occult powers through constant yogic exercises and holding of breath. Some of the mystics even learnt these arts from the yogis. The country was, by that time, unacquainted with the *Sihāh Sittah*[1] and other authentic books of *hadīth*. It was only in Gujarāt that the contact with the scholars of Arabia had kept people conscious of this branch of Islamic learning. 'Alī Muttaqī of Burhānpūr and Muhammad Tāhir of Patan had kept the torch of Traditions lighted in that part of the country and endeavoured to descredit innovations in religious thought and usages. But the orientation of life in all its aspects as dictated by the authentic sayings and practices of the Prophet, attempted by the scholars in Gujarāt, was unknown to other parts of the country, nor did the people know anything about the *Sihāh Sittah* or about the scholars who had devoted their lives to the study of *hadith* and rebuttal of unsound norms and usages. The *Jawāhar-i-Khamsa* by a celebrated Shattārī mystic, Shaikh Muhammad Ghauth of Gwālior, offers the best example of the then *sufī* thought which was permeated with the indigenous theosophic doctrines and practices. The articulate structure of *sufī* precepts and cults propounded in this book are based entirely on the supposed utterances of the earlier mystics or the personal experiences of the author who, it seems, did not consider it necessary to deduce his precepts from any authoritative collection of *ahādith* or any book dealing with the Prophet's life and character. Being a collectanea of orisans for special

1. The six most authentic compilations of *hadīth*.

occasions and specific purposes, it includes supplications for offering *namāz-i-ahzāb* (prayer of the confederates), *salāt-ul-'āshiqīn* (prayer of the lovers), *namāz tanvīr-ul-qabr* (prayer for grave's illumination) and a number of other devotions and supplications meant for different months of the year that cannot be traced to any saying or doing of the Prophet of Islam. The second part of the book gives a list of *asmā'-i-akbariyah* (the great names), coined by the Shaikh, which are really the names of the angels in Hebrew and Syriac with words normally prefixed to vocative names as if beseeching their help instead of God's. There is another hymn in the praise of certain beings, in the language of ancient Jews, with vocative prefixes and known as *du'ā-i-bashmakh*. These mysterious appellations, which constitute the essential core of propitiating the so-called divine attributes, have even agents which are supposed to be cognizant of the secrets and significances of their principals. Similarly, the alphabets have implicit meanings and agents. It includes even a litany entreating Caliph 'Alī, as the worker of miracles.

Thus, when the Mujaddid took up his reformatory task, it was a period of exaggerations and eccentricities displaying an admixture of the *sunnah* and *bid'ah* (innovation), theology and philosophy, Islamic mysticism and *yoga*—all intermingled indiscriminately. The Mujaddid has given a graphic description of the then obtaining situation in one of his letters to Khwājā Muhammad 'Abdullah. He writes:

> "Innovations that hit the eye these days are numerous enough to make one think that a river of darkness and gloom is surging on all sides, while the lamp of *sunnah* is quivering in this pitch-black darkness like the fireflies gleaming in a night shrouded with darkness."[1]

It was the time when Islam was imperilled in India; the Muslim kingdom was trying to strike at its roots, the cloisters of mystics were paying scant regard to the sayings and doings

1. *Maktūbāt*, Vol. II, No. 23 to Khwājā Muhammad 'Abdullah

of the holy Prophet, the *sharī'ah* (the law) and the *tarīqah* (the mystic path) were presented as two distinct disciplines having different codes and prescriptions, and if anybody ever summoned up the courage to know the theological sanction for any mystical formulation the answer given to him was:

> Drench thy prayer mat with wine if the revered bartender so directs,
> For the traveller is not ignorant of the runs and rounds of the track.

This was the time when Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindī thundered forth:

> "*Tarīqah* (the path) is subservient to and follower of the *sharī'ah* (the law); to be perfect in the Law is much more desirable than to attain the spiritual raptures and ecstasies and perceptions through the eyes of heart. Observance of even one commandment of the holy Law is more edifying than a thousand years of spiritual exercises: taking of a brief nap following the practice of the Prophet is more salutary than the night-long vigil. The practices of the mystics provide no authority to decide what is permissible or impermissible for these things require the testimony of the Scripture and the *sunnah* and the books of jurisprudence. Strivings of the soul by those who are misguided take them away from God instead of bringing them nearer to Him. Visions and auditions of the mysterious world are just a means of amusement and recreation and they do not absolve anyone from following the commandments of the *sharī'ah*".

Shaikh Ahmad expounds the matters discussed here in these letters:

> "*Sharī'ah* is the guarantor of all the felicities of this world and the next. There is not even one objective for the fulfilment of which one may require anything else besides the *sharī'ah*. The *tarīqah* (the path) and the *haqīqah* (reality), which form the distinctive marks of the mystics are subservient to *sharī'ah* i.e., nothing more than the

means for obtaining the state of *ikhlās* (sincerity). Thus, the only purpose served by the *tarīqah* and the *haqīqah* is to actualise the inner spirit of the *sharī'ah* and not to achieve any objective lying beyond its reach. The mystical states and stations, ecstatic transports, intuitive knowledge and spiritual insights gained by the mystics during the course of their spiritual journey are not the ends; they are simply images and ideas meant for cheering up and inspiring hope in the novices of the spiritual path so that they may move onward and reach the stage of *ridā* (resignation) which is the goal of *sulūk* and *jadhbah* (i. e., the compliance of the *sharī'ah*)".[1]

In the same letter he further writes:

"Those who are undiscerning take the states and stations as the goals of spiritual journey and its observations and manifestations as significations of reality with the result that they become prisoners of their own imaginations and mental creations, and remain unblessed by the quintessence of the *sharī'ah*.

"*Dreadful for the idolators is that unto which thou callest them. Allah chooseth for Himself whom He will, and guideth unto Himself him who turneth (towards Him).*[2]"

In another letter he explains the ascendancy and precedence of obligatory observances over those voluntary in these words:

"The actions from which proximity to God ensues are either obligatory or voluntary, but the voluntary observances never make the grade of obligatory ones. Fulfilment of an obligatory observance at its due time and in all sincerity is preferable to performance of voluntary ones for a thousand years."[3]

That cleansing of the self and healing of the souls can

1. *Maktūbāt*, Vol. I, No. 36, to Hāji Mullā Muhammad of Lahore
2. *Ibid.*, (Q. XLII : 13)
3. *Maktūbāt*, Vol. I, No. 29 to Shaikh Nizām of Thānesar

easily be brought about through compliance with the commandments of *sharī'ah* than by means of penance and purgation is forcefully advocated by the Mujaddid in one of his letters in which he writes:

"Discharging a commandment of the *sharī'ah* is more efficacious for cleansing the self of its baser instincts than the strivings and exertions of a thousand years undertaken on one's own initiative. These troubles and pains not undertaken to meet the requirement of the *sharī'ah* can rather whet the appetite of the self and increase its indulgence. The Brahmins and the yogis have not left a stone unturned in taxing their energies in travails but these have not proved of any benefit to them except in making them even more self-indulgent and immoderate."

In one of his letters Mujaddid explains the significance of the *sharī'ah's* accomplishments in these words:

"A majority of people live in fool's paradise, well-contended with the illusory almonds and walnuts. What do they know of the perfection of *sharī'ah* and the reality of *tarīqah* and *haqīqah*? They consider the *sharī'ah* as the shell and the *haqīqah* as the kernel, but they are not aware of their inner realities. They have been duped by the superficial talk of the mystics and bewitched by the stages and stations of the spiritual journey."[1]

The merits of living up to the precepts and practices of the Holy Prophet have been thus delineated by the Mujaddid in another letter.

"Excellence lies in conforming to the *sunnah* of the Prophet and the honour in abiding by the dictates of the *sharī'ah* as, for example, taking a nap during day-time with the intention of living up to the Prophet's *sunnah* is better than keeping vigils during innumerable nights. Similarly, giving away a farthing in satisfaction of *zakāt* (poor due)

1. *Maktūbāt*, Vol. I, No. 40 to Shaikh Muhammad Chitrī

is more meritorious than expending a hillock of gold of one's own accord."[1]

In yet another letter he writes:

"Immature mystics trifle with the obligatory and commendatory devotions and give greater attention to the *fikr* (contemplation) and *dhikr* (remembrance). In a like manner they take to ascetic excercises but neglect the congregational and Friday prayers. They do not know that the performance of even one prayer with the congregation is more rewarding than a thousand rounds of sacraments. The *fikr* and *dhikr* with due deference to the *sharī'ah* are undoubtedly essential and meritorious. There are also misguided scholars who are hard at work in popularising the voluntary observances even at the cost of neglecting those that are obligatory."[2]

In one of his letters addressed to Mīr Muhammad N'omān, Shaikh Ahmad criticises the misguided mystics in these words:

"There is a group among them which has not cared to acquaint itself with the reality of prayers and their characteristic excellences. They want to remedy their ills through alternative recipes which, in their opinion, can fulfil their heart's desire. There are some among them who even assume that the prayer, founded on the relationship between the divine and the devotee, is of litte use to them. They consider fasting as more propitious than the prayer since the former is held by them as expressive of the divine attributes of eternity. And, then, there is a multitude which seeks to assuage its troubled soul through melody and tune and considers whirling and dancing as the consummation of spiritual experience. Have these people not heard that God has not endowed the things impermissible with the properties necessary to work a cure. Had they

1. *Maktūbāt,* Vol. I, No. 114 to Sufi Qurbān
2. *Ibid.*, Vol. I, No. 260 to Shaikh Muhammad Sādiq

known even a bit of the accomplishments of prayers, they would have not gone after musical recitations or ecstatic sessions."[1]

Shaikh Ahmad discusses, in one of his letters, the purification of inner self sought by the non-Muslim ecstatics who develop certain occult powers despite their indulgence in wickedness and immorality. He writes:

"Real purification depends on adherence to righteousness as approved by God, and this rests upon the teachings of the prophets as already explained by me. Thus purification of the self and heart cannot really be attained without the help of prophethood. The purification attained by the infidels and the wrongdoing people is the expurgation of self and not of heart. The cleansing of self alone, however, does not increase anything but waywardness. The mysterious and magical powers sometimes developed by the infidels and wrongdoing people through the expurgation of self aie surely *istidrāj* (illusory miraculous power) which leads them by degrees to hell and destruction."[2]

The Mujaddid held that the antinomian tendency of brushing aside the authority of established religious institutions and observances was extremely dangerous. Dismissing these thoughts as misguided and unsound he writes in a letter addressed to Miān Shaikh Bad'ī-ud-dīn.

"Immature mystics and inconsistent disbelievers desiring to get rid of the *sharī'ah's* obligations maintain that its observance is meant for the commonality. They hold the view that the elite is required to attain gnosis just as the kings and rulers are duty-bound to administer justice to others. Their argument is that since the end of *sharī'ah* is attainment of gnosis, when one attains the knowledge of reality the obligations of *sharī'ah* automatically wither

1. *Maktūbāt*, Vol. I, No. 261 to Mīr Muhammad N'omān
2. *Maktūbāt*, Vol. I, No. 266 to Khwājā 'Abdullah and 'Ubaid Ullal.

away. They bring this verse[1] of the Qur'ān in their support. *And serve thy Lord until there cometh unto thee the certainty.*"[2]

The actions of the mystics can never be taken as the standard, according to Shaikh Ahmad, for deciding the things made permissible or prohibited by the *sharī'ah*. He makes out this point in another letter in which he says:

"No practice of any mystics is authoritative enough to decide what is lawful or unlawful. Will it not be sufficient that instead of reproaching them we pass over their actions and leave them to the judgment of God? This is a matter in which the opinion of Imām Abū Hanīfa, Imām Abū Yūsuf or Imām Muhammad should be considered authoritative rather than the practice of Abūbakr Shiblī or Abul Hasan Nūrī. The half-baked mystics of our day have taken to dancing and whirling as an accepted religious rite and raised it to the level of divine service. *These are the persons who have taken their religion for sport and pastime.*"[3]

Such is Mujaddid's approach to wholehearted affirmation of every commandment of the *sharī'ah* that whenever he is told about any practice or doctrine of the mystics which is incompatible with the proper Islamic beliefs or which seeks to prove any unsound dogma on the authority of any seer or saint rather than placing reliance upon the Book of God or example of the Prophet, it becomes difficult for him to hold his pen from denouncing and assailing the non-conformist view. Once, when an unsound utterance of a mystic Shaikh ('Abdul Karīm Yamānī) was related to him by one of his disciples, Shaikh Ahmad could not tolerate the erroneous remark and expressed his disapproval to it in a very forceful

1. *Maktūbāt*, Vol. I, No. 276 to Miān Shaikh Bad'i-ud-dīn (Q. XV : 99)
2. *Ibid.*, Vol. I, No. 266 to Khwājā 'Abdullah and Khwājā 'Ubaid Ullah (Q. VII : 51)

and poignant style.

> "My Lord! this meek-spirited is not accustomed to endure such observations which stir his Fārūqī blood and do not allow him to think out any explanation by stretching their sense. Such things might have been acceptable to Shaikh Kabīr Yamānī or Shaikh Akbar Shāmī, but what we require is the testimony of Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him) and not those of Muhīy-ud-dīn Ibn 'Arabī, Sadr-ud-dīn Qūnawī or Shaikh 'Abdur Razzāq Kāshī. We require *nass*[1] and not the *fus*:[2] the conquest of Medina has made us independent of the conquest[3] of Mecca."[4]

Vigorous defence of the sacred law of Islam leads Shaikh Ahmad to hold that every action in compliance with the *sharī'ah* can be classified as *dhikr* or remembrance of God. He writes to explain his viewpoint in one of his letters to Khwājā Muhammad Sharaf-ud-dīn Husain.

> "One should continually engage oneself in the remembrance of God. Every action in accordance with the *sharī'ah* comprises *dhikr*, even though it be of the nature of sale and purchase. In every action and behaviour the dictates of the *sharī'ah* should be kept in view so that each one of these actions qualifies to be reckoned as a *dhikr*. The *dhikr* is basically meant for putting away mental inadvertence and thus when one is heedful of legal doctrines of the lawful and unlawful in every act, one automatically becomes absorbed in God's remembrance who is the Ultimate Lawgiver. This would by itself save one from remissness and bestow the wealth of perpetual

1. Lit. a demonstration, that is, a legal maxim derived from the Qur'ān or *hadīth*.
2. *i. e.*, *Fusūs il-Hikam* by Muhīy-ud-dīn Ibn 'Arabī
3. The allusion is to *Futūhāt-i-Makkiyah* by Muhīy-ud-dīn Ibn Arabī
4. *Maktūbāt*, Vol. II, No. 100 to Mullā Hasan of Kashmir

engrossment in God."[1]

It was on the basis of absolute superiority of the *sharī'ah*, as preached by the Mujaddid, that he severely criticized *sijdah-i-t'āzīmi* (prostration of honour) which had come into vogue in the circle of certain mystics. On being informed that some of his disciples were not cautious enough in this regard, the Mujaddid warned them against that practice.[2] Similarly, he refuted and condemned such polytheistic customs and usages, taken lightly in those days, as rendering honour to paganish rites, seeking help of the beings other than God, participation in festivals and customs of the infidels, vows and oblations in the name of saints and keeping of fasts to propitiate the blessed saints or daughter of the Prophet. In a letter[3] written to a female disciple, the Mujaddid has mentioned a number of such unsound practices which had come into vogue among the Muslim masses in those days.

The restoration of sound and authoritative Islamic beliefs and practices and refutations of all innovations containing antinomian and polytheistic elements constituted a distinguishing feature of the great movement of revivalism and reform initiated by Shaikh Ahmad after a long time in India. These un-Islamic practices stimulated by contact with the non-Muslim majority in the country and gaining strength with the passage of time were then threatening to misdirect the religious life of the Indian Muslims by corrupting the whole level of Islamic religious thought and action in the country. The reformatory endeavour of the Mujaddid was brought to consummation by the later mystics of Mujaddidī-Naqshbandī school like Shāh Walī Ullah (1114-1176/1702-1762) and his sons[4] and finally by Saiyid Ahmad

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1. *Maktūbāt*, Vol. II, No. 25 to Khwājā Muhammad Sharaf-ud-dīn Husain
2. *Maktūbāt*, Vol. II, No. 92 to Mīr Muhammad N'omān and Vol. I, No. 29 to Shaikh Nizām-ud-dīn of Thānesar.
3. *Makūtbāt*, Vol. III, No. 41 to Sāliha
4. Among whom the efforts of Shāh Muhammad Ismā'il Shahīd

(Continued on next page)

Shahīd and his disciples who built up one of the strongest movements in history for the propagation of Islamic teachings through popularising the translations of the Qur'ān and *hadīth* in local languages as well as exemplified Islamic behaviour through their personal conduct.

Rejection of Bid'at Hasanah

Bid'ah, in Islamic terminology, signifies acceptance of any dogma or ritual not laid down by God or His Messenger, as an approved article of religion, or treating it as something sacrosanct and helpful in achieving proximity to God, or even conducting oneself in a manner one ought to treat an accepted rule of Islamic law. *Bid'ah* is thus the man-made law built-in within the system of law given by God. A closer look at *bid'ah* reveals that it has a set of laws complete with all the ramifications like obligatory and commendable observances which run parallel to those prescribed by the *sharī'ah*, and they sometimes even increase in number, importance or sanctity than the rules of God-given law. *Bid'ah*, by its very nature, refuses to accept that the *sharī'ah* is complete and inviolable or that nothing by way of religious duties due to God can now be added to its corpus. It is blind to the fact that whatever new additions are made to the articles of religion would necessarily be unsound and unauthoritative. The implications of *bid'ah* have been eloquently described by Imām Mālik who says:

> "Whoever initiates a *bid'ah* in Islam and also considers it as something commendable, virtually declares that (God forbid) Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon

(Continued from previous page)

(d. 1246/1831), the grandson of Shāh Walī Ullah, deserves to be mentioned. See *Saiyid Ahmad Shahīd*, brought out by the Academy, for the heroic struggle launched for the revival of faith in the nineteenth century.

him) did not complete his mission honestly. For Allah has said: *This day have I perfected your religion for you.* Thus nothing that was not accepted as an article of faith during the lifetime of the Prophet can now be recognised as authoritative."[1]

The chief characteristic of the *sharī'ah* revealed by God is that it is easy and practicable for all human beings in every age. It is because the Law-giver is also the Creator of man and He is aware of the nature, strength and weakness of His creatures: *Should He not know what He created? And He is the Subtle, the Aware.*[2]

The divine law, therefore, makes allowance for the needs and propensities of human beings but when man promotes himself to the position of the Law-giver he is not able to reckon with all these intricate matters. This is the reason why the addition of frequent *bid'ahs*, from time to time, makes religion so involved, difficult and bewildering that the people are forced to bid farewell to the religion itself. And, then, the promise made in the Qur'ān that *God hath not laid upon you in religion any hardship*[3] is automatically withdrawn. The long list of customs and rites and religious observances added to the apostalic faith by these innovations, wherever they have found a free hand, bespeak of the truth of this contention.

Another notable feature of the faith and religious law is the uniformity in its structure and content. The creed and *sharī'ah* remain unchanged in every age and country: a Muslim migrating to any other part of the world would have no difficulty in following the rules of religion; he would require neither a local guide nor a directory. But the *bid'ah* running counter to this religious principle does not exhibit any uniformity. It displays local characteristics which may be the product of a certain

1. Related from Imām Mālik by Ibnul Majishoon
2. Q. LXVII: 14
3. Q. XX: 78

regional or historical development or may issue from personal likes and dislikes of a certain individual. The *bid'ah* thus differs from place to place and changes its shape so easily that it can assume a different form and complexion for every city, locality or a house.

It was because of this knowledge of things, human and divine, and the causes by which all human affairs are controlled that the Prophet of Islam had strongly urged his followers to follow his *sunnah* and keep themselves aloof from every form of *bid'ah*. He is reported to have said that:

> "Whoever gives rise to anything not a part of my religion then it shall be rejected."
>
> "Keep away from *bid'ah*, for every *bid'ah* leads to waywardness which will end up in the hell."

The holy Prophet had also made the following farsighted prediction for the guidance of his followers:

> "Whenever some people introduce an innovation in the religion, an equal amount of *sunnah* is taken away."

The companions of the Prophet of Islam rejected every innovation in religion. Thereafter the jurists, scholars and reformers took a stand against the impious creeds and practices cropping up in their own times and relentlessly fought to nip every mischief in the bud. However, the overcredulous masses as well as the worldly minded leaders and hypocritical ministers of religion have always exhibited an irresistable attraction to those pious frauds which proves the truth of the Quranic description of these blasphemers.

> "O ye who believe! Lo! many of the rabbis and monks devour the wealth of mankind wantonly and debar (men) from the way of Allah."[1]

The scholars and reformers had sometimes to face severe trials for opposing such innovations but they remained firm

1. Q. IX: 34

in what was considered by them as an struggle for safeguarding the faith and the *sharī'ah* from corruption. They were branded as static, conservative and enemies of religion but they continued their fight against heterodoxy until the unscriptural beliefs and practices were completely effaced with the result that today we know of the existence of several of these innovations only from the pages of history. The leftovers of such deviations are still being combated by the true scholars of Islam who have been thus praised by God.

> "Of the believers are men who are true to that which they covenanted with Allah. Some of them have paid their vow by death (in battle), and some of them still are waiting; and they have not altered in the least."[1]

One of the greatest fallacies that had very often led the people astray was what the people knew as *bid'at-i-hasanah* or the nice innovation. The misguided people had divided the innovations into nice and vile, and held that every innovation was not necessarily worthless. In their opinion a number of innovations fell in the category of nice innovations and were exempt from the prophetic dictum that 'every innovation is a waywardness.'[2]

The Mujaddid raised the banner of revolt against such specious arguments of the misguided *sūfīs* and denied them so strenuously and emphatically with confidence and cogent arguments as had not been done by anybody among his immediate predecessors or contemporaries. The extracts given

1. Q. XXXIII : 23
2. Certain people argued on the basis of Caliph Umar's remark who, on witnessing the people offering the prayer of *tarāwīh* in congregation, said, "This is a good innovation". Obviously, he had used the word *bid'ah* only in a literal sense because the offering of *tarāwīh* prayers since the life-time of the Prophet was an established fact, proved by authentic Traditions. For a fuller discussion of the subject see *Al-A'itasām bil-sunnah* by Imām Shātibī and *Aidhā' ul-Haq as-Sarīh fi-Ihk'ām il Mayyit waz-Dharīh* by Mohammad Ismā'il Shahid.

here from a few of his letters bear witness to his clear thinking, self-assurance and deep knowledge of the subject.

Inviting Shaikh Muhammad 'Abdullah, the son of this spiritual mentor, to join hands with him in rejecting the innovations and reviving the *sunnah* of the holy Prophet, Mujaddid writes in a letter:

> "Now that one thousand years have run out since the prophethood of the last Messenger of God and the signs of the Doomsday have began to unfold themselves, and this is an age in which the *sunnah* is shrouded and falsehood has taken root, the *bid'ah* is becoming popular as the order of the day. A man of mettle is required today who should overthrow *bid'ah* and bring it to its knees and re-establish the example of the Prophet through his spirited defence of the *sunnah*. Popularity of the *bid'ah* which corrupts the religion, and veneration of an innovator really means destruction of the citadel of Islam. The holy Prophet is reported to have said that:
>
> > "Anybody who holds an innovator in reverence assists in pulling down the edifice of Islam."
>
> "The need of the hour is to take courage and familiarize the people with even one practice of the Prophet and make them leave any one of the *bid'ah*. The effort in this directions has an abiding importance but now that it is sapping the strength of Islam, it has become all the more necessary to enforce the teachings of Islam, promote the *sunnah* and discourage the *bid'ah*."

Mujaddid goes on, in the same letter, to explain that the *bid'ah* has no virtue at all as contended by certain persons by coining the phrase of *bid'at-i-hasanah*.

> "The people of old saw some merit in certain innovations and declared some of its categories as unexceptionable. This humblehearted, however, does not agree with them and does not consider any innovation to be acceptable. He finds nothing save darkness and wickedness in them.

The Prophet of Islam (peace be upon him) has clearly stated that 'every innovation is a waywardness'."[1]

In another letter written in Arabic, he writes to Mīr Muhib Ullah:

"It is difficult to understand how these people have found any merit in the things that have been invented after the completion of religion as approved and confirmed by God? Are they not aware of this basic fact that anything ingrafted after the completion and acceptance of a religion by God cannot have any merit whatsoever? *After the Truth what is there save the error?*[2]

"Had they known that attribution of any merit to a thing inserted in a perfect religion implied imperfection of that religion and amounted to an announcement that God had not yet completed His favour, they would have dared not deny what had been asserted by God."[3]

In another letter he argues the same point even more forcefully:

"Since every innovation in a religion is a *bid'ah* and every *bid'ah* is an error, what does it mean to attribute any merit to an innovation? As we know from the *ahādith* that every *bid'ah* impairs a *sunnah*, it is quite apparent that every *bid'ah* is vile a innovation. It has been related from the Prophet that:

"When any nation invents an innovation, a proportionate part of the *sunnah* is taken away from it. Thus attachment with a *sunnah* is infinitely better than trying to invent a new practice."

"Hassān has related on the authority of the Prophet that:

"Whenever a people will set up an innovation in the religion, God will take away a proporionate amount

1. *Maktūbāt*, Vol. II, No. 23
2. Q. X: 33
3. *Maktūbāt*, Vol. II, No. 19

of the *sunnah* prevalent among them and will not restore it till the Day of Judgement."

"One should know that the innovations taken as meritorious by certain scholars and mystics are always found, on deeper thought, to be conflicting with the *sunnah*."[1]

He goes on to reject the existence of nice innovations in the same letter in these words:

"There are some who hold that the innovations are of two kinds, the nice and vile innovations. They call those innovations as nice which were developed after the Prophet and right-guided Caliphs but which did not contradict any *sunnah* of the Prophet. An innovation is defined as vile by them if it runs counter to a *sunnah*. This meek-minded cannot see any worth or merit in any innovation and finds all of them vile and wicked. Even if we suppose that certain actions appear as virtuous and good to certain persons owing to a deficiency in their discernment, they would have nothing but sorrow and remorse when they are granted necessary comprehension and discretion.

"The last Prophet of God (on whom be peace and blessing) has explicitly stated that whoever introduces something which was not originally a part of our religion, it shall be rejected."[2]

One of the innovations that had gained popularity in those days was the *mīlād* or the gatherings to celebrate the birth of the holy Prophet. That this celebration was held in commemoration of the lovesome personage held dear by all as the apple of one's eye, any opposition to it was a delicate task involving misunderstanding and anger in the masses, and was likely to be taken as a sign of ungratefulness and lack of tender feelings for the holy Prophet. Mujaddid was, however, endowed with a soundness of judgement which had convinced him that anything

1. *Maktūbāt*, Vol. I, No. 186 to Khwājā 'Abdur Rahmān Muftī of Kābul.
2. *Ibid.*

not prevalent during the time of the Prophet could not be beneficial for the Muslims nor contribute to their spiritual development: such an innovation would rather give birth to tendencies harmful to the Muslims. Therefore, when he was asked whether there was any objection to such gatherings if they were not attended by any ritual against the approved religious practices he answered:

> "This poorling is of the opinion that unless this practice is completely given up, the interested persons would not cease taking advantage of it. If the practice is declared as lawful, it would gradually lead to finding justification for other innovations also. Even a small mistake becomes a prelude to grave errors."[1]

The courageous step taken by the Mujaddid put the lid on a dangerous innovation which was gaining popularity among the masses owing to the patronage of undiscerning scholars and mystics and the interest taken in its furtherance by credulous nobles and the rich among the Muslims.

1. *Maktūbāt*, Vol. III, No. 72 to Khwājā Hosām-ud-dīn

CHAPTER VII

UNITY OF BEING VERSUS UNITY OF MANIFESTATION

Shaikh Akbar Muhyi-ud-dīn Ibn Arabī

Among the earlier mystics who, in a state of perpetual rapture, are reported to have made remarks suggesting *Wahdat-ul-Wujūd* or the Unity of Being, the two well known illuminists were Shaikh Bā Yazīd Bustāmī and Husain b. Mansūr Hallāj. The former, regarded as a common precursor of many a subsequent mystical order is credited with the sententious expressions like, "Glory be to me, how exalted am I" and "Naught but God dwells within my raiment", while the famous dictum of Mansūr Hallāj was, "I am the Truth."[1] All these aphorisms became familiar tunes with the later mystics.

Shaikh Muhyi-ud-dīn Ibn 'Arabī (d. 638/1240), commonly known as the Shaikh Akbar (the Great Master) was, however, the originator of this unitive doctrine in a cognitive sense for

1. 'The Truth' signified here the person of God.

it was through his writings that the proposition reached its culminating point. The blaze of his glory rose in his life-time so brightly that his thought was diffused into almost every mystical order and came to be regarded as the touchstone of spiritual perfection. Denial of Ibn 'Arabī's doctrine was thereafter taken for ignorance of mystic thought and experience. Giving a graphic description of Ibn 'Arabi's hypothetical propositions Mujaddid writes in a letter that he systematised his doctrine with major and minor premises in the same way as rules of grammar and syntax are formulated.[1] It is not our intention to enter into any detailed description of the principle of *Wahdat-ul-Wujūd* or its development which flowered into a definite school of thought and produced prolific literature enough to suffice a library. It would even be difficult to attempt a brief survey of this doctrine which will lead us to the examination of an abstruse thought of philosophy and mysticism. Furthermore, as the comprehension of the doctrine requires acquaintance with the terminology of philosophy and mysticism as well as a personal experience of the journey of spirit, the readers who are interested in a deeper study of the subject may go through the two famous works of Shaikh Akbar, *Futūhāt Makkiyah* (the Meccan Revelations) and *Fusūs il-Hikam* (Bezels of Wisdom).[2]

We shall present here a few extracts from the *Wahdat-ul-Wujūd* of Maulānā Abdul 'Alī of Lucknow commonly known as Bahr-ul-Uloom (d. 1225 A.H.) for he is regarded as an authority and most authentic interpreter of the Shaikh Akbar's doctrines expounded in the *Futūhāt Makkiyah* and *Fusūs il-Hikam*. The writings of Maulānā 'Abdul 'Alī include a number of technicalisms of mystical vocabulary which can be fully understood

1. *Maktūbāt*, Vol. III, letter No. 89, to Qazi Ismāil Faridābādī.
2. It would also be worthwhile to go through the *Asl al-Usūl fī Bayān Mutābqata al-Kashf b'il M'aqūl wal Manqūl* by Saiyid Shah Abdul Qādir Mehrabān Fakhri (d. 1204), Madras University Press, 1959

by those who are acquainted with *sufī* thought and phraseology, yet his explanation is by far the most concise and easiest than other writings on the subject.

"All the things that exist besides Allah in the world are either states or determinations. All these states and determinations are His manifestations, that is, His inflows, and this means that He reveals Himself through them. This inflowing is not of the nature as asserted by those who believe in the indwelling of or Union of God with the Universe. This influxion is rather like the integral of numerical 'one' since all the numericals denote nothing save a unit of numeration. The world has only one *'ain* or essence, that is, it is the manifestation of only One Being in everything. The world came into existence from the Being of God and His Being manifests itself in the multiplicity of the former. Allah is the First and the Last, and the Manifest, and the Hidden. Allah has not made anyone His partner.

"The blessed names of Allah, whether they are transcendental or immanent, do not manifest themselves without any substance. Now, that these names are dependent on substances for their manifestation and their perfection cannot be conceived in their absence, God brought into existence the *'āyān* or essences of the world so that these essences may serve as the seats of His manifestation and reveal the perfection of His *(asmā')* names.

"Allah is absolutely self-sufficing in so far as the perfection of His Being is concerned but the perfection of His names (*asmā'*) is not independent of the outward existence of the world. Hāfiz of Shīrāz has said:

No mattar if the beloved spreads shadow over the lover;
I clamoured for him and he longed for me.

"This is also testified by an accepted *hadīth* which quotes God as saying: "I was a hidden treasure. I wished that I

should be known so I brought the creation into being. Wherefore I manifested Myself and My names through My creations."

"One who belives in the duality of existence; one of God and the other of casualness *(mumkin)*[1] is guilty of ascribing associates to God although his guilt is not apparant. On the other hand, one who is convinced of the Unity of Existance, asserts that Allah alone exists, everything else is His manifestation and thus the multiplicity of manifestation does not conflict with the Divine Unity. Then he is a true Unitarian.

"You are not the essence of Reality because the existence of God is absolute while yours is limited and locational and nothing that is locational can be deemed to be absolute. But in your inner nature you are the essence of Reality because the Absolute Reality resides in you. Only thus you can witness God free from limitations inherent in the essence of created beings: thus it is located in the locational beings. In other words, you find God, the Absolute, manifested in a located being. Nothing exists save God nor is there any deity beside Him."[2]

Ibn Arabi's mists of legend thickened so rapidly after his death that he became the inspirer of almost ninety percent mystics, philosophers and poets. He was acclaimed as the greatest mystic of all times; yet the devotion accorded to him evoked criticism of such eminent scholars as Hāfiz Ibn Hajar 'Asqalānī, 'Allāma Sakhāwī, Abū Hayyān, Shaikh al-Islām 'Izz-ud-dīn, Hāfiz Abū Zura'a, Shaikh-al-Islām Sirāj-ud-dīn al-Balqīnī, Mullā 'Ali Qāri, 'Allāma S'ad-ud-dīn Taftāzānī etc. All these scholars are known for their deep knowledge of religious sciences as well as compass of mind, yet they were

1. *Mumkin* is a being of which neither the existence nor non-existence is inconceivable.
2. Bahr-ul-Uloom Maulana 'Abdul 'Ali 'Ansāri, *Wahdat-ul-Wujūd*

dubbed as orthodox for none excepting a few of them laid any claim to be a pilgrim of the spiritual path endowed with intuitive knowledge of the hidden realities. Their opposition to Ibn ‘Arabī was, therefore, brushed aside as the enmity of the uninitiated.

Ibn Taimiyah's Criticism o Wahdat-ul-Wujud

The greatest critic of *Wahdat-ul-Wujūd* was Shaikh-ul-Islām Taqi-ud-dīn Ibn Taimiyah (661-728/1263-1328) who analysed the doctrine and its influence on the common people enamoured by mysticism in the light of the Qur'ān and the *hadīth*. He was born twenty-three years after the death of Ibn ‘Arabī (d. 638/1240) in Damascus, the resting place of the latter. By the time Ibn Taimiyah completed his education, not more than forty to forty-five years had elapsed since the death of Ibn ‘Arabī, but he was by that time a niche in the hall of fame and his doctrine had captured the minds and souls of scholars and mystics in Egypt and Syria. He was recognised as the greatest exponent of *tauhīd* or the Unity of God. Shaikh Abul Fath Nasr al-Munjabi of Egypt, a devoted follower of Ibn ‘Arabī, was the spiritual guide of the Prime Minister Rukn-ud-dīn Bebars al-Jāshangir. Ibn ‘Arabī's writings, specially the *Futūhāt Makkiyah* and the *Fusūs il-Hikam*, were recognised as favourite manuals of study. Ibn Taimiyah has, in his writings, acknowledged that some of Ibn Arabī's works like *Futūhāt Makkiyah*, *Kunh al-Muhkam il-Marbūt*, *Al-Durrat al-Fākhrah* and *Mutāl‘a un-Najūm* contained propositions which were not only profound but these works also possessed literary excellence. Among the followers of Ibn ‘Arabī, Ibn Sab‘een, Sadr-ud-dīn of Konya (who was also a disciple of the Shaikh Akbar), Billiyānī and Tilmisānī were held in high esteem during the time but Ibn Taimiyah preferred Ibn ‘Arabī amongst his followers which, by the way, shows that he was fair and impartial in forming an estimate of Ibn ‘Arabī's teachings. The maxim followed by Ibn Taimiyah was: *If ye*

judge between mankind, that ye judge justly."[1] Comparing Ibn 'Arabī with his disciples and followers, he writes :

> "Ibn 'Arabī is nearest to Islam amongst them. His writings are comparatively seemly because he makes a distinction between manifestation and exteriority and pays due regard to the commands and prohibitions and the law. He commends moral behaviour and devotions prescribed by the earlier mystic seers and that is why a number of puritans and *sufīs* adopt the mystical excercises recommended in his writings. A number of them are unable to comprehend these realities but those who come to understand and appreciate them, fathom the true meaning of his teachings."[2]

Ibn Taimiyah was conscious of the grave responsibility involved in passing a judgement on an eminent Muslim held in esteem by others. He writes in the same letter :

> "Only God is aware how one will end one's life's journey. May God grant salvation to every Muslim man or woman, dead or alive ; *Our Lord ! Forgive us and our brethren who were before us in the faith, and place not in our hearts any rancour toward those who believe. Our Lord ! Thou art Full of Pity, Merciful.*"[3]

Corroding Influence of Wahdat-ul-Wujūd

However, it seems that the spirit of ascetical-mystical discipline, its popularity among the masses and the little regard paid to religious obligations by the enthusiastic propagators of Ibn 'Arabī's doctrine had given rise to an intellectual and moral confusion in Syria, then a part of the kingdom of Egypt ruled by the Turks. Its followers had developed antinomian tendencies taking up the performance of acts which

1. Q. IV : 48
2. Letter to Shaikh Nasr al-Munjabī, *Jalā ul-'Aynain*, p. 57
3. *Ibid.* (Q. 59 : 10)

violated the law and even the approved norms of decency. It was a serious situation, which, naturally, caused concern to a scholar and theologian who was not only learned but also deemed it his duty to uphold the approved and established religious institutions. In short, the way Ibn 'Arabī's doctrine of the Unity of Being was translated into action by its votaries, it could not avoid condemnation by the religious scholars for it is not the root by which a tree is known but by the fruit it bears.

Ibn Taimiyah was always extremely cautious in attributing anything to somebody else but, as he has written, Tilmisānī not only boasted of his belief in the Unity of Being but also made no secret of his actions and behaviour flowing from that belief. He was a drunkard and did not desist from committing acts regarded impermissible by the *sharī'ah.* The argument he preferred in his defence was that all existence being one, how can there be anything permissible or impermissible. Writes Ibn Taimiyah:

> "I was told by a reliable person that he used to study the *Fusūs il-Hikam* under Tilmisānī and rated the book as the work of a saint and gnostic. When he realised that some of its contents were in conflict with the teachings of the Qur'ān, he brought the matter to the notice of Tilmisānī who replied, "Qur'ān is actually replete with *shirk*, it differentiates between the Creator and the created; true *tauhīd* you will find in our works." Tilmisānī also used to assert that ecstatic revelation proves the things which fly in the face of intellect."[1]

Ibn Taimiyah says further:

> "Once a man who accompanied Tilmisānī and his friends passed by a dead dog which seemed to have had eczema. Tilmisānī's friend remarked, "This is also the Absolute Being." Thereupon Tilmisānī replied, "Is there anything

1. *Al-Furqān Bain al-Haq Wal Bātil*, p. 145

outside His Being.? Nay, everything dwells within His Being."[1]

In his other Book, *Ar-Radd al-Aqwām 'Alā Fusūs il-Hikam* Ibn Timiyah cites another platitude of the then followers of Unity of Being. He writes:

"A certain person was asked, "Why should the wife be allowed to a man and his mother prohibited to him when all the existence was one?" He replied, "Surely, there is no difference between them. But those who are uninitiated (with the truth of Unity) still insist that one's mother is prohibited. We also say: Yes, she is prohibited to (the ignoramuses like) you."[2]

It does not mean that all these heretical pronouncements and extravagant behaviours should be attributed to Ibn 'Arabī or his writings. He was pious, an abstainer and an ascetic who earnestly strived for the perfection of his soul, endeavoured to follow the Prophet's *sunnah*[3] and was aware of the ruses of Satan and the self,[4] yet his writings do contain such ecstatic expressions which were later stretched to justify the heretical maxims of his followers. To cite a few instances here he has written that calf worshippers during the time of Moses had in fact paid homage to God (for all existence is one) and that Moses had admonished Aaron at taking exception to the calf worship. Ibn 'Arabī presents the Prophet Moses as a knower through God who witnessed Divine manifestation in every object and took it as the essence of everything. In his view Pharaoh was perfectly justified in considering himself as "the God Most High"; his assertion really represented the essence of his God-given right to rule over the people. Further, as

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1. *Al-Furqān Bāin al-Haq Wal Bātil*, p. 145
2. *Ibid.*, p. 42
3. Ibn 'Arabī belonged to the school of Imām Daūd who rejected analogy and followed the *sunnah* literally.
4. Cf. Ibn 'Arabī's *Rūh ul-Quds*

every existence is a part of the Universal Existence, Pharaoh had a greater right to claim that privilege since he had the right to rule over his people. Ibn 'Arabī goes on to say that when the magicians realised the truth of Pharaoh's statement, they acknowledged the fact by saying, "So decree what thou wilt decree. Thou wilt end for us only the life of the world." Ibn 'Arabī draws the inference that the wizards' recognition of Pharaoh as the Lord of the world meant that he was also "the Lord Most High". Ibn 'Arabī even criticizes Prophet Noah and makes much of his idol-worshipping people who, in his view, were devotees of the Supreme Being. He explains away the deluge as an overflow of divine epiphany in which the tribe of Noah was immersed.[1]

This is perhaps the reason why a number of mystics who held Ibn 'Arabī as one of the saints blessed with the proximity of essence, had forbidden their followers to go through his writings. Shaikh Muhyī-ud-dīn 'Abdul Qādir 'Idrūsī, the author of the *An-Nūr us-Sāfir* relates from his guide Shaikh Abū Bakr 'Idrūsī that the latter was never rebuked by his father save once when his father saw a portion of Shaikh Akbar's *Futūhāt Makkiyah* in his hand. He further says that although Shaikh Abū Bakr's father had strictly forbidden him to go through the *Futūhāt* and the *Fusūs*, he nevertheless insisted that one ought to regard the Shaikh Akbar as one of the eminent saints endowed with mystical knowledge.[2]

Indian followers of Ibn 'Arabī

The doctrine of the Unity of Being, imported into India during the eighth century A.H., was not a new precept for the

1. All these examples have been taken from Ibn Taimiyah's *Ar-Radd ul-Aqwam 'ala Ma fi Kitāb Fusūs il-Hikam* and *Al-Furqān Bain-al-Haq wal Bātil* wherein these have been cited from Ibn 'Arabī's *Fusūs il-Hikam.* Some followers of Ibn 'Arabī, however, hold these as later interpolations in his books.
2. *An-Nūr us-Sāfir,* p. 346

country which had already been its oldest radiating centre. There are also historians of mysticism who hold that the Muslim *sūfīs* of Irān, Irāq and the countries to the west of India bad received radiations of the doctrine of existential monism from ascetical-mystical life and thought of India. Even after the advent of Islam in this country, India continued to uphold, without any break, its faith in what can be expressed as "Everything is He." The Aryan races and their thoughts, philosophies and religions have always taken kindly to the Unity of Being and religious eclecticism owing to their innate aversion to the Semitic system of a set principle of belief and conduct. Thir predilection of the people of India helped the doctrine of existential monism to take roots in the country and to flourish in the shape of a new school of thought. A large number of eminent mystics in this country such as Shāh 'Abdul Quddūs of Gangoh (d. 944/1537), Shaikh 'Abdur Razzāq of Jhanjhāna (d. 949/1542) Shaikh 'Abdul 'Azīz of Delhi, also known as Shakarbār (d. 975/1568), Shaikh Muhammad Ibn Fazlullah of Burhānpūr (d. 1029/1620) and Shaikh Muhib Ullah of Allāhābād (d. 1058/1648) supported the doctrine no less zealously than Ibn 'Arabī or the Egyptian mystic 'Umar Ibn al-Fāridh (d. 631/1234). All these *sūfīs* were either contemporaries of Ibn Taimiyah or lived during the period very close to his days.

Shaikh 'Alā ud-daulah Samnānī's opposition to Unity of Being

Most of the scholars who rejected the doctrine of the Unity of Being were, as stated earlier, strict observers of the religious law and practices of orthodoxy with no pretensions to mystical intuition of reality or ecstatic transports to higher levels of consciousness gained through strivings after the soul. Their criticisms of the doctrine were thus rejected out of hand as impulsive outbursts of the people uninitiated with the way. The first gnostic and *sūfī* who contradicted the doctrine in a sedate and thoughtful manner was Shaikh Rukn-ud-dīn 'Abul

Makārīm ʻAlā-ud-daulah Samnānī.[1]

ʻAla-ud-daulah Samnānī (659—736/1261—1336) was born at Samnān in Khurāsān in a wealthy and noble family whose members occupied positions of authority in the local administration. He took his lessons in the mystical discipline from Shaikh Nūr-ud-dīn ʻAbdur Rahmān al-Kasraqī al-Istarā'inī (d. 717/1317), a mystic guide belonging to the Kubrawī order. He controverted the doctrine of Unity of Being, reasoned the point with its followers and expounded his view point in his letters. He held that the destination of a pilgrim of the Way was not *tauhīd* or Unity but attainment of the stage of *ʻubūdiyat* or servitude. His observations and utterances compiled by his disciple Iqbāl b. Sādiq of Sistān are still extant in several libraries under the name of the *Chahl Majlis, Malfūzāt Shaikh ʻAla ud-daulah Samānī* etc. ʻAbdur Rahmān Jāmī has drawn the material contained from pages 504 to 515 of the *Kitāb Nafahāt ul-Uns* from the *Malfūzāt* of Samnānī.[2]

Wahdat-us-Shuhūd or Unity of Manifestation

We find the doctrine of the Unity of Manifestation described as an alternative precept to the Unity of Being by two reputed personalities. They differ in their approach and inclinations but their sincerity of purpose, search for truth and sound reasoning had led them to the same conclusion as if in fulfilment of the Quranic promise: *As for those who strive in Us, We surely guide them to Our path.*[3] One of these was Shaikh ul-Islām Hāfiz Ibn Taimiyah who was essentially a scholar of Traditions, dialectician and a jurist. The other one was Makhdūm ul-Mulk Shaikh Sharaf-ud-dīn Yahya Manerī (d.782/1380), a noted mystic, who had attained the stage of gnosis. *Al-ʻUbūdiyah* written by the former bears testimoney to the

1. *Maktūbāt*, Vol. III, No. 89
2. See the article by F. Meier in the *Dā'iratul Ma'ārif Islāmiah*
3. Q. XXIX: 69

fact that he was not only conversant with the stage that can be termed as the Unity of Manifestation but was also aware that the pilgrims of the Way come across this stage after crossing the stage of the Unity of Being. He was also cognizant of the fact that even the highest stage attained by the gnostics was lower to that occupied by the prophets of God and their companions.[1] However, Ibn Taimiyah never claimed to be a master of spiritual experiences to these stages in his works.

The Makhdūm, on the other hand, delineated his personal experiences with the competence expected of him as a mystic blest with oracular perception of divine mysteries. He writes, "What is generally understood by *Wahdat-ul-Wujūd* or fading away of the unreal and its complete extinction really means recession of all the existences before the Absolute Being much in the same way as stars cease to shine and bright specks lose their identity in the presence of resplendent sun." He lays bare the secret of the doctrine of *Wahdat-ul-Wujūd* succinctly by an aphorism wherein he says "nihility is quite different from invisibility of a thing." Makhdum's comprehension of the reality of mystical experience is manifested by his remark that the delicate nature of subtle spiritual perception misleads many a mystic unless the succour of God is there at hand to keep him on the right path.[2]

The Need of New Master

A new Master of the Way was thus required who had traversed the stages of the *sūfī* path and attained the state of intimacy with the Ultimate Reality by traversing ecstatic states. Only a man with direct experience of the spiritual realities could have talked about them with confidence on the basis of his

1. See *Risālat ul-'Ubūdiyah*, pp. 85-88, Al-Maktabah-Islāmī, Damascus (ND).
2. *Maktūbāt Seh Sadī*, Letter No. 1, Saviours of Islamic Spirit, Vol. II, pp. 296-303

intimate cognition instead of denying certain experiences of others because of his unfamiliarity with them.

The arguments already advanced for or against the Unity of Being could broadly be divided into three categories.

First, complete acceptance of the principle and its presentation as a positive fact and the highest stage of spiritual experience.

Secondly, rejection of the doctrine as a figment of imagination and esoteric perception of an individual without any reality.

Thirdly, holding forth a parallel doctrine of the Unity of Manifestation which implied that the spiritual perception of the pilgrims of the Way did not point to the extinction of every existence in the presence of Absolute Being nor it meant that everything had passed away in God. The proposition meant that every existence remained where it was although the proximity of the Absolute Being caused them to appear as non-existent through its radiation. This was like the invisibility of the stars when the sun had risen. Expiry of every other existence in the face of Real Existence was analogous to the disappearance of the stars before the brilliance of the sun.

Mujaddid's Fresh Approach

The Mujaddid approached the problem in a new way, different from the previous three, by emphasising that the *Wahdat-ul-Wujūd* or the Unity of Being was a stage in the journey of spirit striving for divine illumination wherein the mystic perceived that nothing existed save the Pure Being or that everything else was a part of the totality. At this stage the mystic apprehended that all the existences besides the Pure Being were merely its different forms and aspects, and this was what Ibn 'Arabī and the gnostics of *Wahdat-ul-Wujūd*, called *tanazzulāt* (descents) of the Perfect Being.

But according to the Mujaddid, if the pilgrim of the path

of spirit forged ahead with the help of God in the light of *sharī'ah*, he passed on to another higher stage which was *Wahdat-us-Shuhūd*.

The Mujaddid did not deny *Wahdat-ul-Wujūd* which had been for ages an article of faith and the goal of spiritual journey for innumerable mystics and philosophers. Nor did he question the sincerity and godliness of Ibn 'Arabī or sublimity of his achievement in the realm of spirit. He accepted the greatness of Ibn 'Arabī and his spiritual experience but went on to add a further stage in the destination of spiritual journey which was in keeping with the Islamic creed and the tenets of the *kitāb* and the *sunnah*. Thus, instead of rejecting the findings of the earlier *sufīs*, the Mujaddid added something which made their experiences and formulations not only compatible with the law but also urged them to achieve new heights in their journey of spirit.

Personal Experiences of the Mujaddid

With these introductory remarks about Shaikh Ahmad's doctrine of the Unity of Manifestation, let us now turn to his letters describing his own personal experiences. In the letter given here he has described his progress from the stage of *Wahdat-ul-Wujūd* to that of *Wahdat-us-Shuhūd* to Shaikh Sūfī.

> "This humble-spirited had held the belief of unitarians since his early days. His father was expressly wedded to that school and persistently followed its practices......As the saying goes that the son of a jurist becomes a half jurist, this meekhearted was inclined towards this system of belief and also enjoyed it until the grace of God led him to have the guidance of Muhammad al-Bāqī, the great mystic and knower through God. He guided this inglorious fellow in the discipline of Naqshbandiyah order and kept a close watch over his spiritual perfection. In a short time the deeper devotions of this exalted order disclosed to this meek-spirited the secrets of *tauhīd-i-wujūdī*

(existential unity) which was, at that time, overestimated by him. He was favoured with the spiritual insight and intuitive knowledge incidental to that stage in full measure and there was hardly anything that was not divulged to him. The subtle and dainty mysteries described by Ibn 'Arabī were unveiled to the sight of this poorling who found himself at the pinnacle of what is called *tajjalī-i-dhātī* (vision of the Being) by Ibn 'Arabī and beyond which there was no stage according to him. The intuitive knowledge and ecstatic insights of the stage regarded by Ibn 'Arabī as marked off for the highest saints were granted to this meek-hearted in all its details. This was a stage of ecstatic rapture in unicity so overpowering that in the letters I had written to my revered guide in those days, I had penned certain verses evincing that intoxication.

"This state of intoxication persisted for long, the months changed into years, until the unbounded mercy of God showed its face and unveiled the mystery of "*Naught is as His likeness*".[1] The revelations signifying unitive experience and Unity of Being gradually faded away. The cognitions of *ihātah* (encompassment), *sarayān* (immanence), *qurb* (nearness) and *maiyyat-i-dhātī* (convergence with the Being) gave place to an implicit conviction that the Absolute Being had nothing in common with anything witnessed in this finite world; the former encompassed and was proximate to the letter in its knowledge only. This is realy the creed of the true believers whose endeavours may find acceptance with God. His Being is pure, not united with anything; incomparable and incomprehensible while the world is wholly contaminated and corrupt. How can He that is indeterminate be the essence or like unto what is qualified and how can the necessary be given the name of the possible? The eternal cannot be contingent; one excluded

1. Q. XLII: 11

from nothingness cannot be the same as that liable to extinction. Interchangeability of the truths is an impossibility and to think that it can be so would neither be correct, nor compatible with reason, nor yet the law. It is strange that Shaikh Muhī-ud-dīn and his followers recognise God as incomprehensible and His attributes as illimitable yet they attest their own circumfluence of and esoteric nearness to the Absolute Being. The fact of the matter consists of what the scholars of *Ahl-i-Sunnat* have held that the comprehension and proximity to God is possible in knowledge only.

"The period during which this humble self acquired the knowledge contravening the mystical apprehensions of the Unity of Being was most gruesome to him for he did not consider anything more important than this patricular concept of *tauhīd.* He used to beseech God with tears in his eyes to let him continue with the experiences incidental to that stage. At last, all the veils were cast aside and the inescapable reality dawned on him. Then he came to know that the world is like a mirror unto the perfection of the God's attributes but the reflection seen in the mirror is not the same as the thing reflected nor the shadow is the essence of the thing from which it is projected—as believed by those adhering to the *tauhīd-i-wujūdī* (Existential Unity).

"The issue can be elucidated by giving an example. Supposing there is an erudite scholar possessing encyclopedic knowledge who desires to bring his knowledge to light and demonstrate his competence not known to others. He invents for the purpose certain alphabets and sounds. In a case like this it cannot be claimed that these alphabets and sounds which are just a means of exhibiting his competence, either encompass or embody his knowledge and proficiency. They cannot even be said to possess the nearness to or proximity of existence with him. They

would rather bear the same relationship to him as an argument has to the thing argued. The alphabets and the sounds are no more than the signs of his competence and whatever relationships (such as essence, unity, circumfluence or esoteric nearness or else co-presence of the two) are established thereby are merely illusory. Nevertheless, since the competence of the said scholar and the alphabets and sounds correspond to the manifest and manifested or the argument and thing argued, certain people have come to conjure up these as affinities. In truth and reality, however, the competence (of the learned) is unrelated to his manifestations. Similarly, the Absolute Reality and its creations do not have any affinity beyond the argument and the thing argued or the manifestation and the contents of manifestation...........The repeated contemplations upon *tauhid* or Unity lead certain persons to have a psychic perception of an illusory object because continuous meditation impresses upon their minds certain forms of their own imagination. There are persons who come to cherish a liking for repetitive remembrance of *tauhid* while others incline towards it because of their infatuation with the Unity of Being. For the love causes a lover to conceive nothing except his beloved, he can visualise only what he loves. This, however, does not mean that the objects not adored by him cease to exist; for that will be against the reality of perception, reason and the law. The passion of love often leads the people to believe in the comprehension and nearness to the Absolute Being—this concept of *tauhid* is on a higher plane than the first two and depends on the spiritual mood, yet even this is not supported either by the reality of things or reason. Any effort to prove it compatible with the reason or the law amounts to specious reasoning. In effect, it is the result of erroneous mystical experience which assumes the shape of a juristic error and then it chronically refuses to recognise its mistake.

The reason for it can, in a way, be attributed to the rapturous state of the mystic."[1]

Unity of existence

In another letter written to Shaikh Farīd Bukhārī, Shaikh Ahmad explains the difference between the Unity of being and the Unity of Manifestation.

"The knowledge of *tauhīd* (unity) obtained by the *sufīs* during their journey of spirit is of two kinds, that is, *tauhīd-i-shuhūdī* and *tauhid-i-wujūdī*. *Tauhīd-i-shuhūdī* or the Unity of Manifestation consists of witnessing the One. The traveller of spirit has his gaze fixed on the One Existence alone while *touhīd-i-wujūdī* or the Unity of Being means exclusive awareness of the One and perceiving all other existences as nonentities."[2]

In this letter to Shaikh Farīd he continues to elaborate the point further:

"Supposing a man is convinced of the existence of sun, but this conviction, by no means, obliges the non-existence of the stars. He will indeed, not see the stars when he beholds the sun. He shall then observe only the sun. Although he will not see the stars but he would know that the stars are not non-existent. He would rather be aware that the stars have not perished but are not visible because of the radiance of blazing light emitted by the sun."[3]

In the same letter the Mujaddid tells us that the realisation of the Unity of Manifestation dawns upon a mystic at an stage subsequent to the experience of the Unity of Being:

"My revered guide Khwājā Bāqī Billāh used to have faith in the Unity of Being as he has himself explained it in his letters and writings. However, the benevolence

1. *Maktūbāt*, Vol. I, No. 31
2. *Ibid.*, No. 43
3. *Ibid.*

of God helped him at last to advance from that stage and guided him to the road of higher spiritual experiences which widened his restricted cognition."[1]

Mujaddid goes on further to describe the real import of the doctrine preached by Ibn 'Arabī and his followers in the following words:

"They swear by the *Wahdat-ul-Wujūd.* They hold that there is one existential being and it is that of God. In their view the world is merely nominal, unreal although they recognise that it is cognitively discernible. They say that the extraneous world did not get even the scent of Real Existence. They consider the world as the *zill* or adumbration of the God but this adumbration in only perceptive; in reality and extraneous existence it is simply a nihility."[2]

In another letter which was written to one Yār Muhammad of Badakhshān, the Mujaddid recapitulates his progress from the stage of *Whadat-ul-Wujūd.* He writes:

"The writer of these lines was originally convinced of the *Whadat-ul-Wujūd.* He was convined of *tauhīd* since his childhood days and placed reliance on it even though he had no glimpse of its illumination by that time. When he took to the path of spirit, he was first favoured with its illumination and remained at that stage for a fairly long time. Several of the cognitions belonging to that stage were granted to him which solved the problems normally faced by the pilgrims of spirit at that stage. It was after a long time that this humblehearted advanced to the next stage but then he found himself apprehensive of *tauhīd-i-wujūdī* or the existential unity. This diffidence did not amount to its rejection but could be regarded as a bashful

1. *Maktūbāt*, Vol. I, No. 43
2. *Maktūbāt*, Vol. I, No. 160 to Yār Muhammad Al-Jadīd al-Badakhshī al-Tālqānī.

acceptance of the doctrine. He remained in this condition of self-distrust for quite some time until he finally rejected the doctrine since the relatively lower position occupied by it was demonstrated to him. Thereafter he attained the stage of *zilliyāt* or adumbration which is a stage higher than the former. This meek-spirited had no choice in his rejection of the doctrine and, in fact, he never wanted to go ahead of the stage which had been the destination of many an eminent mystic. But, when he reached the stage of *zilliyāt* he found that his own being and the world were adumbrations (of the Ultimate Being). He longed to remain even at the latter stage since he still considered *Wahdat-ul-Wujūd* as the acme of illumination and the two stages were rather congenial to one another. The fate had, however, willed it otherwise. The grace and mercy of God helped him to advance to still higher stages and ultimately he attained the stage of *'abdiyat* (servitude). It was then that he realised the perfection and loftiness of that stage. Then he repented and regretted his longings for the lower stages. Had this poor in spirit not been gradually advanced from one stage to another and also not been shown their ascending orders, he would have perhaps taken this stage (of *'abdiyat*) as a regression of spiritual experience for he had earlier been convinced that there was no stage higher to the *Wahdat-ul-Wujūd*. Sure enough, *Allah sayeth the truth and showeth the way.*"[1]

Moderate Views about Ibn 'Arabī

Mujaddid disagreed with Ibn 'Arabī but his criticism of the latter was always moderate and showed no signs of rancour against him. In a letter included in the first volume of the

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1. *Maktūbāt*, Vol I, No. 160 to Yār Muhammad Al-Jadīd al-Badakshi

Maktūbāt he expresses his views about Ibn 'Arabī:

> "This meek-spirited considers Shaikh Muhyī-ud-dīn as one of the elects but regards his doctrines (which are against the faith of the Muslims and teachings of the *kitāb* and the *sunnah*) as incorrect and injurious......There are people who have either exalted or denounced him and strayed far from the road of moderation Some of these persons denounce him and controvert his doctrines and ecstatic illuminations while there are others who follow him unreservedly, are convinced of the truth of his doctrines and bring forth arguments and evidences in his favour. There is not the least doubt that both these groups have been guilty of either overrating or belittling the Shaikh and have left the golden mean....... It is rather strange that Shaikh Muhyi-ud-dīn seems to be one of the elects and the saved but most of his spiritual illuminations which do not agree with the faith of the true believers are erroneous and untrue."[1]

The difference between the stand taken by the Mujaddid, on the one hand, and that of the opponents and followers of Ibn 'Arabi, on the other, has been stated by him clearly in another letter addressed to Khwājā Jamāl-ud-dīn Husain. He writes:

> "This humble self differs with the followers of the Unity of Being in what they call its *kashf* (mystical revelation) and *shuhūd* (spiritual apprehension). The learned are convinced of the harmfulness of these precepts (that is, Unity of Being and denial of all existence besides that of God). This poorling has no doubt about the excellence of the states and illuminations of the *tauhid-i-wujūdī* (Existential Unity) provided they also lead one to go beyond it."

1. *Maktūbāt*, Vol. I, No. 266 to Khwāja 'Abdullah and Khwājā 'Ubaid Ullah
2. *Maktūbāt, Vol. II, No. 42, to Khwājā Jamāl-ud-dīn* Husain

Opposition to Existential Unity

One might ask that if Existential Unity was an intermediary stage traversed by innumerable mystics in every age, many of whom lingered on at that stage, and only a few were helped by the grace of God to go beyond it to the higher level of the Unity of Manifestation, then what was wrong with it? Why did the Mujaddid criticize it so vehemently and why did he insist on the affirmation as well as superiority of the Unity of Manifestation?

The reason is that a good number of mystics among the adherents of the Unity of Being, some of whom were even contemporaries of the Mujaddid, had taken the doctrine as a means of achieving freedom from religious observances and legalistic morality prescribed by the *sharī'ah*. Such mystics had been led astray by the misconception that since everything was a fragment of the Ultimate Reality or was the Reality itself, there was no reason to discriminate between truth and untruth, faith and infidelity. They thought that the *sharī'ah* was for the common, uninitiated folk while the Unity of Being constituted a higher principle meant for the elects, the mystics and the gnostics, who were to establish contact with the source and being of the Supreme Reality. In the tenth century India, when the Mujaddid was passing through his formative stages of intellectual and spiritual perfection, the whole country was resounding with songs eulogizing the doctrine of Unity of Being, placing faith on a par with infidelity and sometimes even preferring the latter to the former.[1] Innumerable verses praising infidelity were then familiar tunes with the masses who took them as oracles of self-evident truth. In one such verse the proposition presented was that:

Belief and infidelity are bosom friends,
One who has'nt infidelity has no faith.

1. The famous Urdu poet of the thirteenth century, Mirzā Ghālib gave

(Continued on the next page)

This verse was explained by another writer in the following manner.

"It means that Islam resides in infidelity, and infidelity in Islam, or, as the Qur'ān says: *Thou causest the night to pass into the day, and Thou causest the day to pass into the night.*[1] Here the night stands for infidelity and the day for Islam."[2]

The same writer quotes the verse:

Love is affiliated with infidelity,
Unbelief is the essence of mendicity.

Thereafter, the writer goes on to explain the verse as follows:

> "Knowledge is the greatest veil. The end of this knowledge is *'ubūdiyat* which is also the greatest veil. If this great mask is removed Islam gets blended with infidelity and infidelity with Islam; then the essence of Godhood and true devotion emerges from it."[3]

Mujaddid, endowed with a fervent zeal as well as a deep insight into the essentials of the faith, was one of those who have been predicted to appear from time to time as renewers of faith in an authentic Tradition of the holy Prophet.

> "The knowledge will be inherited by pious and God-fearing men of every race who will contradict the exaggerations of the credulous, sophistications of the misguided and misinterpretations of the ignorant persons in this religion."[4]

The promise made in this Tradition has always stimulated

(Continued from previous page)

expression to the same principle in this verse:

We are unitarians and our creed is obliteration of rituals,
The religious orders, when effaced, become a part of belief.

1. Q. III: 27
2. *Risālah 'Ishqiyah*, p. 47
3. *Ibid.*, p. 73
4. *Mishkāt, Kitābul 'Ilm.*

the Muslims of India to undertake an intellectual and theological reassessment of the bases of faith in a most comprehensive manner. The Mujaddid had marked that the grip of the law was losing its hold on the community which was gradually being impoverished of its reverence and devotion to the *sharī'ah*. He wrote in a letter addressed to Shaikh Farīd Bukhārī:

> "Most of the people have either owing to common usages or the categories of knowledge adapted to their own inclinations, or even because of infidelity and unbelief taken to Existential Unity. They consider everything to be a part of Reality or the Reality itself and thus they contrive to get rid of the obligations of *sharī'ah* in one way or the other. They are indolent and slack in following the commandments of the *sharī'ah* and seem to be well satisfied with their behaviour. If they ever acknowledge the need of acting on the precepts of the *sharī'ah*, they take them as something incidental and collateral to the real purposes of the faith. The ultimate objective of the *sharī'ah*, in their view, is to attain the higher mystical consciousness. God forbid! I seek refuge of God from such irreligious beliefs."[1]

He goes on to say in the same letter:

> "Several groups flaunting themselves in the garb of *sufīs* are nowadays openly preaching Existentialist Monism. They consider that this doctrine holds the key to the perfection of spirit. They have wandered far from reality because of these conceptions. They conceive the sententious expressions of their spiritual guides in the light of their own figments of imagination which keep them self-complacent."[2]

1. *Maktūbāt*, Vol. I, No. 43
2. *Ibid.*

Greatness of Shaikh Ahmad

The greatness of Shaikh Ahmad Mujaddid Alf Thānī consisted not only in exposing the deceptive nature of the mystic stage of annihilation represented by *Wahdat-ul-Wujūd*, beyond which there were still higher stages of spiritual illumination, but also in the fact that he was able to verify his findings through his own experiences. He traversed the stages and states of spiritual journey and was able to describe the intuitive knowledge of Reality attained through that process as was not done earlier by any traveller of the path. Peter Hardy, though not an authority on the subject, has correctly stated that "Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindī's great achievement was paradoxically to win Indian Islam away from *sufī* extremism by means of mysticism itself. Perhaps his success was due to deep personal understanding of the meaning and value of what he rejected."[1]

Compromising Attitude of the Later Scholars

Before we end the discussion it seems necessary to mention, in all fairness, that save by the Mujaddidyah order represented by Khwājā Muhammad M'asūm who propagated his father's doctrine both within the country and abroad, the unqualified and clearly distinct stand taken by the Mujaddid in regard to the *Wahdat-us-Shuhūd* (Unity of Manifestation) was sobered down by the later mystics and scholars. Soon after his death the *sūfī* orders, some of which even traced their spiritual descent to him, started steering a middle course between the *Wahdat-ul-Wujūd* and *Wahdat-us-Shuhūd*, indicating a clearly compromising attitude between the two doctrines. Some of the eminent scholars even went to the extent of claiming that the difference between the two precepts signified merely a verbal contest while others argued that the Mujaddid actually misunderstood

1. P. Hardy in *Sources of Indian Traditions* (comp.) W. Theodore De Bary, (New York-1958), p. 449

Ibn 'Arabī since he had not gone through all the works of the latter. This was perhaps the reason why Ghulām Yahyā of Bihār (d. 1180/1767), a disciple of the famous Mujaddiyah Shaikh Mirzā Mazhar Jānjānān, wrote the *Kalimāt-ul-Haq* at the instance of his spiritual guide. He spelt out the thought and doctrine of Shaikh Ahmad in plain words and controverted the mollifying approach of the then mystics claiming to derive spiritual inspiration from Shaikh Ahmad's Mujaddidyah order.

Saiyid Ahmad Shahīd

Among the illustrious mystics of later times Saiyid Ahmad Shahīd (d. 1246/1831) had the honour of unequivocally maintaining the doctrine of *Wahdat-us-Shuhūd* on the basis of his own ecstatic illumination.[1] A mystic as well as a fighter in the way of God, he belonged to the Mujaddidyah Ahsāniyah order[2] whose mystical experience shows no trace of Unity of Being and steers clear of all attempts to reconcile *Wahdat-ul-Wujūd* with *Wahdat-us-Shuhūd*[3]

1. Saiyid Ahmad might have inherited the mystical knowledge from his own forefathers among whom Shāh Saiyid 'Alam Ullah was a distinguished disciple of Saiyid Ādam Binnaurī or it might have been due to his own intuitive knowledge. For a detailed account see *Saiyid Ahmad Shahid* by Muhi-ud-dīn Ahmad.
2. The mystical order known as Ādamiyah and Ahsāniyah is associated with Saiyid Ādam Binnaurī, an eminent disciple and deputy of Shaikh Ahmad.
3. See *Sirāt-i-Mustaqīm* and the *Hidāyat Rābi'yah Dar Bayān-i-Thamarāt Hubb 'Āshqī, Ifādah* 1, p. 12, Maktabah Salfiyah, Lahore (N. D.)

CHAPTER VIII

FROM AKBAR TO JAHANGIR

Some Worthy Scholars and Mystics

Before we discuss the efforts made by the Mujaddid which eventually turned over a new leaf in the religious policy of the Mughals, the prevalent misconception that Akbar's eclecticism did not evoke any antagonism or resistence among the people needs to be dispelled. It is incorrect to assume that by the time of Akbar's rule Islam had lost its vigour in the country so completely that everybody preferred to pass over this directive of the holy Prophet:

> "Whoever of you witnesses something being done against the precepts of the *sharī'ah* or a prohibited act being committed, he ought to forcibly stop it. If one is unable to do so, one ought to disclaim and denounce it but if this be also not possible, one ought to hate it with all his heart. This is the lowest degree of faith."[1]

The historians and biographers have preserved accounts of the courage shown by several persons in registering their displeasure at Akbar's un-Islamic ordinances.

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1. *Sahīhain*

Shaikh Ibrāhīm Muhaddith of Akbarābād (d. 1001/1593) once came to the *'Ibādat Khānā* on the invitation of the Emperor but he did not perform the prescribed ceremonials of the royal court. Instead of being cowed down by the royal splendour he even tried to persuade Akbar to follow the path of Islam. Shaikh Husain of Ajmer (d. 1009/1601) left the place when Akbar visited the shrine of Khwāja Mu'in-ud-dīn Chishtī. Consequently, he was suspended from trusteeship of the shrine and the attached convent, and ordered to leave for Hijāz, but he refused to prostrate before the Emperor even on his return to India. He incurred the King's displeasure and spent several years as a prisoner in the fort of Bhakkar but never consented to perform the court ceremonials. Shaikh Sultān of Thānesar was a courtier very close to Akbar and it was at his instance that Shaikh Sultān had translated the *Mahābhārata* into Persian. He offended Akbar by sacrificing a cow and was ordered into banishment to Bhakkar. Akbar pardoned him after sometime on the recommendation of 'Abdur Rahīm Khānkhānā and appointed him as the revenue collector at Thānesar. He was again accused of following the precepts of Islam and ultimately ordered to be executed in 1007/1599.

The courage of convictions exhibited by Shahbāz Khān Kamboh (d. 1008/1600) was perhaps unsurpassed by others. He was a high ranking noble who had been appointed as Mīr Bakhshī by the Emperor but he never hesitated in expressing his views freely in the royal presence. He neither shaved his beared nor took wine, nor yet ever showed any inclination to join the religious order invented by Akbar. Shāh Nawāz Khān, author of the *Ma'āthir-ul-Umarā* is on record that the Emperor was once strolling by the side of a tank at Fatehpūr Sīkrī while Shahbāz Khān was in his attendance. Akbar took hold of the hand of Shahbāz Khān and started chatting with him while taking the stroll. Everybody present on the occasion thought that Shahbāz Khān would not be able to take his hand off and would have to forgo the *maghrib* (sun-set) prayers. Shahbāz

Khān also used to keep mum and busy himself in the remembrance of God between the *'asr* (late afternoon) and *maghrib* prayers. As soon as Shahbāz Khān found that it was the time for *maghrib* prayers, he sought the permission of Akbar for it. Akbar, however, replied, "Don't leave me alone, you can offer the prayers later on." But Shahbāz Khān took his hand off and, spreading a sheet of cloth on the ground, started offering the prayers. After the prayer ended, he busied himself in the recollection and invocation of God's names. The Emperor kept standing before Shahbāz Khān, denouncing and threatening him at his insolence. Amīr Abul Fath and Hakīm 'Alī Gilānī, who happened to be present on the occasion, realised the gravity of the situation and tried to divert the attention of the Emperor. They said, "We also deserve Your Majesty's attention." At last the Emperor was cooled down and went away with them leaving Shahbāz Khān.

Shaikh 'Abdul Qādir of Uch was also a man of great courage. One night when he was at Fatehpūr Sīkrī opium was offered to him by the Emperor but he refused to take it. The Emperor was displeased with him on account of what he said on the occasion. Another day in the *Ibādat Khāna* at Fatehpūr, after the congregational prayers had been recited the Shaikh busied himself with his supererogatory devotions. The Emperor said, "Shaikh, perform your supererogatory devotions in your own house." The Shaikh replied, "Sire, in this kingdom your commands have no force." The Emperor felt annoyed and retorted, "Since you do not like my rule, remain no longer in my kingdom." Shaikh 'Abdul Qādir immediately left the assembly and retired to Uch where he followed the sublime practice of his predecessors by dedicating himself to public weal and remembrance of God. Another Shaikh 'Abdul Qādir of Lahore (d. 1022/1613) had to leave India for Hijāz on account of his firmness on Islamic beliefs and practices. Mirzā 'Azīz-ud-dīn Koka (d. 1033/1625) was foster brother of Akbar and also one for whom Akbar had tender feelings, but he had

to suffer great privations owing to his disapproval of the Emperor's religious views. He was Governor of Gujarāt and also honoured with the title of Khān 'Āzam but he had to flee to Dieu on April 3, 1593 and departed thence for pilgrimage to Mecca. Shaikh Munawwar Abdul Hamīd of Lahore (d. 1015/1606) was another man of firm convictions who was appointed as Sadr by Akbar in 985/1577. He incurred the wrath of the King owing to his devotion to Islam. Akbar ordered to ransack his property including even his books, then summoned him to his capital and placed him behind the bars where he breathed his last.[1]

The recrudescence of rebellion in Bihar and Bengal is also attributed by certain historians to the religious policy of Akbar.

During the initial years of Jahāngīr's rule the court etiquettes and the ordinances promulgated by Akbar, except for the measures that were expressly anti-Islamic, continued to be followed until Jahāngīr himself developed a respectful attitude towards Islam and the *sharī'ah* brought by the Prophet. A number of scholars and mystics discountenanced the un-Islamic practices of the royal court during this period, and some even refused to step beyond the limits of the *sharī'ah* despite the hardships they had to face for their courageous actions. One of these men of steadfast faith was Ahmad b. Muhammad b. Ilyās Husainī Ghurghushtī, who hailed from the north-western regions and is said to have attained spiritual perfection. He was summoned by Jahāngīr to his court and ordered to perform the ceremonials prescribed for the royal court. He refused and remained in detention for three years in the Gwālior fort. He was set free in 1020/1611 by Jahāngīr who also brought him back to Agra with him.[2]

1. All these instances have been quoted from the *Nuzhat ul-Khawātir*, Vol. V.
2. *Nuzhatul Khawātir*, Vol. V.

There is, however, no doubt that the credit for organising a systematic resistance to the religious degeneration promoted by the state policy and its reformation goes to Shaikh Ahmad. He continued to strive with single-hearted devotion to his cause until he succeeded in bringing about a silent revolution which is unmatched in the history of reform and revival in other Muslim countries. His religio-political movement nullified the consequences of Akbar's policy and successively brought to the throne of Mughals sovereigns who showed a greater devotion to the religion than their predecessors until Aurangzīb came to take the reins of government into his hand.

Beginning of Mujaddid's Reformative Effort

Jalāl-ud-dīn Akbar died in 1014/1605 when Shaikh Ahmad was forty-three years of age. The last phase of Akbar's reign had posed a threat not only to the existence of Islam as a dominant religion but even to its continuance as a faith free to uphold its doctrines and observances. This was the time when Shaikh Ahmad had been devoting his attention exclusively to his own spiritual progress and attainment of esoteric knowledge. Hardly anyone among the nobles and grandees of the state knew him or was even aware of his spiritual ascent, sincerity or devotion to God. Shaikh Ahmad had, upto that time, not been able to grapple with the reality on interior levels which could serve as a testimony for communicating his intense spiritual experiences to the members of the royal court and thereby exert a sobering influence on the machinery of the state and its policies. The Emperor was also surrounded by an entourage of the ilk discouraging sincerity of purpose and sobriety of religious thought in the royalty. These courtiers and henchmen had virtually formed an iron curtain that allowed no whiff of fresh air to reach the Emperor who was kept ignorant of the likes and dislikes of the common people. In a country which had sustained powerful Muslim kingdoms for the past hundreds of years, Islam was facing

conditions thus depicted by the Qur'ān:

> "When the earth, vast as it is, was straitened for them, and their own souls were straitened for them till they bethought them that there is no refuge from Allah save toward Him."[1]

Things, however, changed with Jahāngīr's accession to the throne in 1014/1605. He was not religious-minded, obviously, because of his upbringing under the care of a father avowedly anti-Muslim, nor was he a practising Muslim; yet he was neither inimical to Islam nor unduly impressed by any alien culture, thought or philosophy, nor yet was he desirous of inventing a new religion or promulgating novel rules for the conduct of the state. In other words, if he was not a defender of the faith, he was also not its adversary. The rulers who are fond of sport, art and good living normally take little interest in introducing new and novel measures for the governance of the country for they get satisfied with the things like a critical taste in matters of dress and pleasures of the table. But, such persons generally possess an instinct of reverence for those righteous and heavenly-minded persons who have raised themselves above worldly desires, fame and honour. Such persons are thus more accessible to truth than those who arrogate themselves to the position of the founder of any new school of thought or philosophy of life.

Jahāngīr belonged to the category of sovereigns known for their catholicity and open-mindedness. It was not difficult for the sagacious and discerning persons to realise that his accession to the throne was the opportune time for attempting a gradual transformation of the state and its religious policy, and bringing them back on the right path.

Proper Line of Action

Three courses of action were then open to the persons like

1. Q. IX: 118

Shaikh Ahmad and others well-versed in religion and endowed with spiritual perfection. Their religious enthusiasm could take one of these courses:

(1) To withdraw to their closet leaving the country and the state to go unrestrained on its way, and to occupy themselves with the remembrance of God, contemplative concentration and guidance of the people desirous of traversing the path of spirit. This was, in fact, the course adopted by hundreds of scholars and mystics of the time who were spreading the light of faith and morals to innumerable persons in their hospices spread all over country.

(2) To abandon all hopes of reforming a kingdom and its ruler who was a Muslim in name only, and to start a movement for opposing the ruler whose manners and morals were patently un-Islamic. It was the path of resistance and struggle against a state which was decidedly opposed to and inimical to Islam. An attempt for a military takeover or political revolution by giving a call to one's disciples and other dissatisfied sections of the people for joining hands to install another virtuous and believing king, even if he belonged to the house of Bābur, for changing the existing state of affairs as well as religious policy of the government, was the second alternative open at the time.

(3) To establish contact with the courtiers and grandees having the ears of the Emperor with a view to inviting their attention to the pitiable condition in which Islam and Muslims were placed at the time was the third option. This was to be done for urging the nobility to advise the Emperor for doing something to ameliorate their condition. This course, however, required that instincts of faith and morals were aroused in the nobility who were, on top of it, also convinced of the absolute selflessness and sincerity of the reformer. The reformer had to keep himself aloof from worldliness, honour and position so that not even his

worst enemy could accuse him of having any ulterior motive in his sacred task.

The line of action first indicated was neither suited to the temperament of Shaikh Ahmad nor did it accord with the higher reaches of his spirituality. It was also unbecoming for a man inflamed and imbued with the religious zeal for reform and renovation. The Mujaddid had had an intuition from the day he had attained spiritual perfection that the Providence had earmarked him for some higher task than merely guiding the travellers of spirit. He had once alluded to his own feelings by quoting the obseveration of Khwājā 'Ubaid Ullah Ahrār (d. 895/1490), a noted mystic of his own order.

> "Were I to devote myself to taking disciples and their guidance, no spiritual guide in the world would find a follower. But God has entrusted some other task to me and that is to rainforce the validity and centrality of the *sharī'ah* and to strengthen the *millat.*"

Shaikh Ahmad had also elucidated the observation of Khwājā Ahrār in this manner:

> "He used to pay visits to the kings and convert them into his admirers and followers through his spiritual power and then ask them to enforce the *sharī'ah* as the law of the land."[1]

The second alternative would have answered the purpose of a short-sighted reformer having an ulterior political design. Such persons, normally hasty and skeptical, prefer confrontation to well-meaning advice and selfless service with the result that they end up as adversaries of the powers that be. They render the task of religious reform and renovation even more difficult by their indiscreet actions. This is obviously not the method to be used by one desiring penetration of the revealed law into the life and thought of the community, particularly if it is desired not for one's own personal advantage or the benefit

1. *Maktūbāt*, Vol. I, No. 65, to Khān 'Āzam

of one's group or party but for the pleasure of God alone. Such a reformer never cares as to who enforces the divine law into the public life of the Muslim community. Any action in this direction supported by the force of arms was, in the conditions then obtaining in India, fraught with grave dangers and might well have proved suicidal for Islam. The foundations of Mughal kingdom had been entrenched deep into the soil of India by Bābur; Humāyūn had strived hard to regain his lost glory; Akbar had given stability and strength to the empire by his successive victories and no streak of weakness in the Mughal power was visible by that time. An ambitious king like Sher Shāh Sūrī and his able successor Salīm Shāh had failed to dislodge the Mughal supremacy and so had misfired all the subsequent insurrections and revolts against that kingdom. Even if it were possible to dethrone the Mughal rulers, there was every likelihood that the Rājpūts who manned a number of higher positions and had already gained considerable influence and power during the reign of Akbar, would have stepped in to take the reins of government in their hands, which would have sounded a death-knell to the supremacy of Muslims in the country for ever.

An experiment of that kind had, in any case, been already made and failed. Shaikh Bā Yazīd, known by the contradictory appellations of *Pīr-i-Roshan* and *Pīr-i-Tārīk*, had raised the banner of revolt against Akbar as the head of Roshanā'īs in the form of a religious movement. The Roshnā'īs had operated from their headquarters in the Koh Sulaimān and captured Khaibar Pass in order to annex the contiguous areas. They held the powerful army of the mughals at bay for several years. Akbar sent expeditions under Rājā Mān Singh and Rājā Bīrbal, both of whom were uncussessful in subduing the Roshanā'īs and the latter even lost his life in an encounter with them. The Roshnā'īs had later on captured even Ghaznī but their power was eventually broken during the reign of Jahāngīr. The fanatical community of the Roshnā'īs was

ultimately annihilated after Shāhjahān had mounted the throne but no good had come out of the Roshnā'īs' insurrections except disorder and chaos. Ultimately crushed by the Mughals, the Roshnā'īs have only left their name on the pages of history.

Armed uprisings, even if undertaken with the aim of bringing about some improvement, always invite the rancour of the ruling circles who take the religion itself as their adversary and start liquidating the entire religious-minded class. This was perhaps the reason why when Mahābat Khān rose up in arms in 1035/1626, about four or five years after Shaikh Ahmad had been released from the Gwālior Jail, all those who were sagacious and farsighted had tried to dissuade Mahābat Khān from his course of action. That the Mujaddid opted for a constructive and dependable line of action rather than taking a risky and negative path bespeaks of his wisdom and intelligence.

The Mujaddid had thus only one course left open to him and it was to establish contacts with the courtiers and nobles who were, in any case, the followers of Islam. He knew fully well that most of them were not a party to the un-Islamic innovations of Akbar, some detested those measures but were helpless, while others even possessed the zeal and enthusiasm for their faith. Some of the nobles had been on friendly terms with him and his spiritual guide Khwājā Bāqī Billāh, if not actively devoted to them. These nobles were also aware of his sincerity and selflessness as well as his well-meaning anxiety for the religion. Nawāb Saiyid Murtazā alias Shaikh Farīd (d. 1025/1616), Khān Āzam Mirzā Koka (d. 1033/1624), Khān Jahān Lodi (d. 1040/1630), Sadr Jahān of Pihānī (d. 1027/1618) and Lālā Beg Jahāngīrī were some of the prominent nobles well-disposed to Islam.

Thoughts that breathe and words that burn

Shaikh Ahmad started writing letters to these nobles and

grandees and poured the full tide of eloquence in his writings. In vigour and force, grace and effectiveness and expressiveness these letters occupy a unique position and can be favourably compared to similar writings in any language penned anywhere in the world. They still possess the charm and spirit although they were written several centuries ago.[1] It can easily be imagined how these letters would have warmed the blood of those to whom they were addressed. These letters were, in truth and reality, the messages of a broken heart or a restless soul giving a clarion call for the greatest and most successful reformatory movement. And they did transform the character of the great Mughal Empire during the tenth century of Hijrah.

Letters to the Nobles and Grandees

A large number of letters written by Shaikh Ahmad were addressed to Nawāb Saiyid Farīd,[2] who occupied a prominent

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1. For an estimate of the literary value of these letters one may go through the portion dealing with the *Maktūbāt Seh Sadī* of Makhdūm Shaikh Yahyā Manerī and the *Maktūbāt Imām Rabbānī* of Shaikh Ahmad Mujaddid Sirhindī in Vol. II of the *Saviours of Islamic Spirit* by the author.
2. Popularly known as Saiyid Farīd and Shaikh Farīd, his name was Nawāb Murtazā b. Ahmad Bukhārī. He was a man of multidimensional activities. A general, an administrator and a scholar, he had abundant zeal for religion and was known for his generosity, and piety and devotion to men of God. He had been appointed to the post of Mīr Bakshī by Akbar while Jahāngīr further raised his position and conferred the titles of Sāhib-i-Saif-o-Qalam (Master of the sword and pen) and Murtazā Khān on him. He was appointed Governor of Gujarāt and then of the Punjab. He was so magnanimous that often he parted with his clothes to meet the needs of the poor and the destitute. He used to deal out stipends to the widows and the poor, to support the orphans and to meet the expenses of girls' marriages belonging to poor families. About one and a half thousand persons were invited everyday to partake their meals at his table. The city of Farīdābād takes its name from him. He died in 1025/1616 (*Nūzhat-ul-Khawātir*, Vol. V.).

place among the courtiers and provincial governors during the reign of Akbar. He was one of the trusted courtiers of Akbar since the beginning of his rule. He was also devoted to Khwājā Bāqī Billāh. Shaikh Ahmad persuaded Saiyid Bukhārī, on account of the latter's zeal for religion, to prevail upon Jahāngīr to repeal heretical regulations that had been enforced by Akbar and to replace them by measures consistent with the law of Islam.

Unfortunately, these letters have no indication of the dates on which they were written which could have brought to light several aspects of the gradual development of Shaikh Ahmad's reformatory endeavour and the way he impressed his views upon the top officials who paved the way, by using their good offices with the Emperor, to change the government's religious policy, step by step, from its anti-Islamic orientation to a pro-Islamic current. We have therefore, tried to present the letters of the Mujaddid in a choronological order according to our best judgement.

A letter written to Saiyid Farīd Bukhārī, perhaps soon after the accession of Jahāngīr to the throne, expresses the wish that he would follow the right path shown by the holy Prophet and his own progenitors Thereafter, it goes on to say:

> "The King bears the same relationship to the world as does the heart to the body; if the heart is healthy the body will be fit and fine but if the heart is unsound the body will also be weakened. To cure the king is to heal the world and to cripple him is to corrupt the world.
>
> "You know full well the distress into which the followers of Islam had fallen during the preceding era. In the times of old Islam and the Muslims had never to put up with such troubles and humiliations despite the weakness of Islam; then the Muslims were, at the most, constrained to follow their faith and the infidels their own. *Unto you your religion and unto me my religion* was the moto in the days gone-by, but during the days afore the disbelievers used to force Muslims to follow their customs.

The Muslims were even compelled not to disclose the rules of their religion and if any one had the nerve to do so, he was condemned to death. Alas! What a pity! Woe betide! The followers of Muhammad (on whom be peace and mercy) were humiliated and those who denied his apostleship were honoured! The Muslims were bewailing with their bleeding hearts and their opponents were laughing to scorn them. The sun of guidance had been enveloped by wickedness and the light of truth was concealed by the veil of untruth.

"Now that the glad tidings of the removal of these impediments in the way of Islam's glory have reached everyone, high and low, and they have come to know that a son of Islam has mounted the throne, they consider it their duty to assist the king and show him the way of enforcing the *sharī'ah* and strengthening the *millat*. They look forward to assist him in this task whether it can be accomplished by raising their voice or giving him a helping hand."

In the same letter the Mujaddid seeks for the reasons leading to the situation during Akbar's time, and then goes on to say that:

"The affliction during the previous era emanated from the unvirtuous scholars. They led the kings astray from the right path; the seventy-two sects within the *millat* which fell into error were groomed by these very evil scholars. There would hardly be a profane scholar whose unsoundness had not a corrupting influence on others. The ignorant sufis of these days exert the same influence as the undutiful scholars; the corruption of these sufis is communicated like a contagion. Now, if anybody has the capacity to assist in the virtuous act of promoting the faith but he fails to discharge his duty, and thereby Islam is weakened, then he would be held responsible for his inaction. It is for this reason that even this humble and incompetent fellow desires to be enlisted in the group lending

support to the kingdom of Islam and do whatever is possible for him. Since one who goes together with the majority of a class of people is taken as one of them, it may qualify this incapable person to be included in that virtuous group. He considers himself no better than the old woman who twisted strands of hemp to prepare some rope in order to be reckoned as one of the purchasers of Yūsuf. This poorling hopes to call upon your honour in the near future. He is also confident that since you enjoy the company of the Emperor and have his ears, you would do your utmost to promote the *sharī'ah* of the Prophet and extricate the Muslims from their present predicament."[1]

In another letter to Saiyid Farid, he writes:

"The poor and helpless followers of Islam, nowadays, caught in a whirlpool, look forward to the progeny of the Prophet to save them. The Holy Prophet (on whom be peace and blessings) has said that my household was like the ark of Noah; one who got into it was saved and who got down was destroyed.[2] Make bold to attain this great objective. God has been gracious enough to bless you with glory and distinction. If you could win this great prize it will add to your personal distinction and make you excell all others. This humble person intends to call upon you for an exchange of views in regard to the measures necessary for the promotion of *sharī'ah*."[3]

There is also another letter addressed to Saiyid Farīd in which Shaikh Ahmad writes:

"Your honour! Islam is impoverished and embarrassed today. A farthing spent now in its cause will be worth several millions tomorrow. It remains to be

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1. *Maktūbāt*, Vol. I, No. 47
2. *Mishkāt*, on the authority of Abū Dharr, *Musnad Ahmad.*
3. *Maktūbāt*, Vol. I, No. 51

seen who would prove himself bold-spirited enough to qualify for this greatest prize. Anyone who works for the advancement of the *sharī'ah* and strengthening the *millat* does a commendable job......... But, at a time when Islam is distressed and there still live Saiyids like you, it behoves you to possess this treasure for you and your family are its owners while others are only assignees. It is a great merit to posses this virtue as one's patrimony. The Holy Prophet had once said to his companions: "You are living at a time when you would be doomed if you give up even one-tenth of the commandments of God but a time will come when those who will follow even one-tenth of it would be saved." This is the time alluded to by the Holy Prophet and we are the people referred to in this Tradition.

The ball of grace and virtue is afield,
Whats' the matter with the cavaliers, nobody takes the lead!"

After Saiyid Farīd, the next Mughal noble chosen by the Mujaddid was Khān 'Āzam[1] who was closely related to the royal family. Jahāngīr also had a high regard for him. Khān 'Āzam was devoted to the spiritual guides of Naqshbandiyah

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1. Mirza 'Azīz-ud-dīn was the foster brother of Akbar. He belonged to Ghaznī from where his family migrated to Delhi. He was appointed governor of Gujarāt in 980/1572. In the year following his appointment, Akbar went by forced marches in the course of nine days from Fatehpūr to Ahmadābād and fought a battle with Muhammad Husain Mirzā who was besieging 'Āzam Khān. He was again appointed governor of Gujarāt in 997/1589, but he used to criticize harshly the new sect and creed of Akbar. He had the royal seal 'Auzāk' in his charge and held the post of 'Wakīl Mutlaq'. Jahāngīr, too, appointed him on posts of higher responsibility and made him governor of Gujarāt. Although he was prevailed upon by Akbar to accept *Dīn Ilāhī* in 1594-95 A.D., he recanted from it later on. He died in 1033/1624.

order. The letter cited here was probably written to him by the Mujaddid soon after Jahāngīr took over the prerogatives of the crown.

"May Allah help you to achieve victory over the enemies of Islam and make Islam glorious. A *hadīth* of the Holy Prophet predicts that 'Islām made a beginning in unfavourable circumstances and it will be placed in the same condition towards its end.' And now that Islam has reached that stage, blessed are they who stick closer to it. Today the infidels openly deride its creed and hold the Muslims in contempt. They are not ashamed to advocate the customs of the infidels while Muslims find themselves forbidden to enforce the injunctions of the *sharī'ah*. If any one takes courage to follow the commandments of his faith he is censored and reproached.

The fairy stays in hiding while the demon is making merry,
Good gracious, what's all this, nobody can fancy!

".........We find in you a well-disposed sympathizer. It is you alone who has the courage to help regain what we have lost. May Allah help you in this sacred task in the name of the Holy Prophet and his progeny on whom be peace and blessings of God. The Holy Prophet is reported to have said: 'None of you will be a faithful unless they say that you are overzealous'. Such a fervidness issuing forth from Islam is possessed by you: All praise be to Allah, the Glorified One. This is the time when a small service will be recompensed with a goodly return. No heroic deed was performed by the companions of the cave except taking refuge from persecution. At the time when enemy gains an upper hand a little fortitude exhibited by the ordinary soldiers is rewarded with gratitude but a similar hardihood during peace-time, when the enemy is far away, goes unnoticed. The opportunity of pleading the cause of true religion that you enjoy today is not a bit less virtuous

than fighting in the way of God. Utilize this opportunity and seek to get the most out of it. Know that this verbal advice is better than actual fighting. Alas that the meek-hearted like us are helpless even in this matter.........The animosity against the faith of the Prophet displayed by the previous regime is apparently not to be found in the present one : if any complacence in this regard exists at present it is only because of the administration's unacqaintance with Islam. It is very likely to grow into hostility once again making the things intolerable for Muslims."[1]

Khān Jahān,[2] another noble of Jahāngīr's court, was implored in a similar manner by the Mujaddid who wrote to him:

"Were you to take up the responsibility of *sharī'ah's* execution in addition to the duties entrusted to you; the task that you would perform would be similar to that undertaken by the prophets (on whom be peace and blessings of God). You would in this manner illuminate and embellish the faith. The mandicants like us cannot hope to emulate you howsoever hard we may try to do so.

"The ball of grace and virtue is afield,
What's the matter with the cavaliers, nobody takes the lead."[3]

In another letter addressed to Khān Jahān, the Mujaddid wrote to him:

"A great advantage granted to you by God but of whose worth people are generally heedless is that the king comes of a family whose ancestors have been Muslims.

1. *Maktūbāt*, Vol. I, No. 65
2. Khān Jahān Daulat Khān Lodhī was a grandee who was respected and relied upon by Jahāngīr. Himself a scholar he treated the learned with great respect, he was also known for his courtesy to the common people. He rebelled against Shāhjahān and was executed in 1040/1630.
3. *Maktūbāt*, Vol. III, No. 54

In the times preceding which was separated by a long spell from the Prophetic era and lay adjacent to the Judgement Day, certain educated persons consumed with covetousness gained access to the king and sowed the seeds of distrust against religion in his heart by their sycophancy. They misled the simple-hearted people from the right path. You have the ears of a great king like Jahāngīr and thus what a fine opportunity you have to let him know about the faith of the *ahl-i-sunnat* expressly or by dropping out a hint now and then. You ought to present the beliefs of the righteous people in the manner you deem fit or rather try to seek an occasion on which the truth of religion can be unfolded and the difference between Islam and infidelity made clear to him."[1]

Mujaddid also wrote letters to Lālā Beg besides the members of the royal court just mentioned. Lālā Beg held the post of Bakhshī under Sultān Murād, the second son of Akbar, and was later appointed as governor of Bihār.

"It is now a hundred years since Islam fell in a sorry plight; now it has reached the stage when the infidels are not content to follow their own customs; they rather desire to abolish Islamic practices and want that every usage of the Muslims and their way of life should be completely effaced. The matters are in such wise that if a Muslim performs certain Islamic rites (like sacrifice of a cow) he is awarded capital punishment.........If the Islamic customs and practices are allowed to take root at the outset of present kingship, the Muslims will regain some of their lost honour. God forbid, if this is delayed any more, it will create greater difficulties for them. Save us! O Helper and Avenger! Now let us see who comes forward to acquire this merit. This is a grace from Allah; He

1. *Maktūbāt*, Vol. II, No. 67

gives it whom He will; and Allah is the Lord of Grace."[1]

Another grandee of the Emperor's court was Sadr Jahān.[2] Shaikh Ahmad wrote to him:

"I believe that the leaders and the Saiyids and the scholars would be busy, openly and secretly, in furtherance of the cause of religion and getting through with the right path. This weekling need hardly harp upon this issue.[3]"

Avoiding Recurrence of Mistake

At last the time came when Jahāngīr realised his mistake and expressed the desire that a few religious scholars should be summoned to the court, as had been the practice in olden times, to advise and guide the deliberations of the royal court. He asked his religious-minded courtiers to seek for four religious scholars and persuade them to remain in his court for elucidation of the matters pertaining to the *sharī'ah*. The Mujaddid was, however, not pleased with it as he was aware of the causes of previous government's waywardness and could clearly see the harmful effect of that course of action. He became rather anxious and wrote letters to Shaikh Farīd and Nawāb Ṣadr Jahān asking them to get the Emperor revise his order. He wrote:

"For God's sake, do not make this mistake. Instead of having several worldly-minded scholars, select one sincere and selfless scholar who is pious and perfect in spirit."[4]

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1. *Maktūbāt*, Vol. I, No. 81
2. Muftī Sadr Jahān belonged to Pihānī (now in district Hardoi). He was a scholar of Arabic. First he was appointed as Mufti of the Royal army and thereafter held the post of Sadr. Jahāngīr had been his student and had committed to memory forty Traditions of the Prophet from him. Jahāngīr had appointed him as the Commander of 4000 troups and also granted a fief. He died in 1027/1618 at the age of 120 years. (*Nuzhat-al-Khawātir*, Vol. V)
3. *Maktūbāt*, Vol. I, No. 194
4. *Ibid.*

In his letter to Shaikh Farīd, wrote Mujaddid:

"May Allah keep you on the path of your forefathers. It is learnt that the king has, owing to his inborn sense of virtue and religion, ordered you to enlist the services of four theologians who are to remain at the court and advise him on matters relating to the *sharī'ah* so that he takes no action or commands anything that comes in conflict with the law of Islam. Praise be Allah and Glorified be His Name. Nothing can be more inspiring to the persecuted and downtrodden Muslims but this poorling feels obliged to put in a word of advice in this connection. I hope you would not mind the liberty he is taking since anyone who is in dire need is driven to take the extreme course.

"The point is that true and firm theologians indifferent to lust of power and position and devoted to furtherance of religion are seldom to be found these days. If one of these scholars were to take a stand on any sectarian issue just for displaying his superiority over others and getting into the good graces of the king, the cause of religion would necessarily suffer. It was the difference of opinion between the theologians which had brought bad luck to the people and the same danger is again looming large over their heads. This would actually endanger religion let alone promoting its cause. May Allah save us from this evil and calamity of impious scholars. It would be better if only one theologian was selected; it would be nice if he were also a godly soul. To keep company with such a scholar would mean companionship of the blessed. If nobody can be found from those perfect in spirit the best among the theologians ought to be selected.......I find it difficult to express myself more clearly. Just as the welfare of the people rests upon the scholars so is their deterioration dependent on them. Those who are elect among the scholars are also the best among the people

and the evil in their ranks are the most wretched of human beings to whom can be attributed every bad influence and waywardness. Someone who saw Satan sitting idle asked him the reason for his indolence. He replied, "The scholars have occupied themselves with the task I used to perform. They are misguiding the people and tempting them into corruption."

An scholar, voluptuous and self-seeking if he were,
Himself arrantly lost, how can he guide others!

"To come to the point, you have to take action after giving full thought to the matter. Once a wrong step has been taken, nothing can undo the harm inflicted. I feel ashamed of tendering an advice to a person so wise and intelligent as you are, but I have made bold to do so as I consider it a means of my own redemption."[1]

In the letters just cited attention of the grandees was invited to the troublesome situation in which Islam and Muslims had been plunged: they were urged to bring the reverses suffered by Islam in the country to the notice of the king; awaken the king's dormant Islamic consciousness; and to find out a way to bring that calamitous condition to an end. In addition to to these, the Mujaddid's letters include a large number of epistles to those nobles of the royal court who were already devoted to him. Such letters are either instructive or explanatory in regard to the discipline of mysticism or exhort the addressees to give greater importance to the saving of their souls in the hereafter than their worldly advancement. The addressees of such letters are 'Abdur Rahīm Khān Khānān (d. 1036/1627), Qalij Khān Andjānī (d. 1023/1614), Khwāja Jahān (d. 1029/1620) Mirzā Darāb b. Khān Khanān (d. 1034/1625) and Sharaf-ud-dīn Hussain Badakhshī. The instructive tone of the letters to these grandees shows a marked resemblance

1. *Maktūbāt*, Vol. I, No. 53. Another letter, No. 194, addressed to Sadr Jahān, and included in Vol. I, was written on the same subject.

to those written by Shaikh Ahmad to his other spiritual disciples. He remonstrates with them on their failings, advises them the course to be followed by them and expresses joy on their progress on the path of spirit. These letters tend to show that these nobles, spiritually attached to the Mujaddid would surely have, in accordance with the instructions of their spiritual guide, tried to win over the king to Islam. They would have undoubtedly cooperated in this task with the other courtiers of Jahāngīr whom their Shaikh had been constantly imploring and urging for restoration of the Islamic character of the Mughal Empire.

Mujaddid's personal contribution

The discussion has so far related to the indirect efforts made by Shaikh Ahmad through the nobles and grandees of the royal court for bringing round the Emperor to mend his ways and make obeisance to the laws and customs of Islam. The letters written by Shaikh Ahmad in rapid succession to different grandees and in a language that could not have failed to arouse the religious consciousness of the addressees must have had the desired effect. All of them did try to bring about the desired transformation but the key role in this enterprise was played by Nawāb Saiyid Farīd Bukhārī.

The nobles and courtiers were, however, not fitted to give a colour to the disposition and mood of the Emperor necessary for a total break with his past. The state policies tend to revolve round the person of the rulers in the hereditary kingships. A change of heart on the part of the ruler or his coming to place reliance on any godly soul can sometimes make the impossible possible and quickly accomplish a thing for which years of toil and tears are required. Jahāngīr had no idea of the spiritual perfection of Shaikh Ahmad nor the latter had ever tried to visit the royal court or establish contact with the Emperor. There was apparently nothing to bring the two closer but Providence had willed it in a way that affords an eloquent commentary on the Quranic verse ; *But it may happen*

that ye hate a thing which is good for you.[1]

Influence of the Mujaddid on Jahāngīr

We have already referred to the detention of the Mujaddid in Gwālior Fort in the third chapter. After his release, he accompanied the royal camp for three and a half years.[2] During this period, the Shaikh had religious discourses with the Emperor who had already been impressed, first, by his steadfastness in refusing to perform the ceremonial prostration, and then, by his determination to remain in captivity rather than expressing regret to get out of the Fort. The Emperor would have been aware how the Shaikh's saintliness had won over hundreds of fellow convicts to Islam in the Gwālior Fort. He would have also witnessed his piety and selflessness, prayers and supplications and the depth and extensiveness of his knowledge. There is also no doubt that Jahāngīr was an intelligent man who had ample opportunity of forming his own estimate of the nobles, scholars, mystics and theologians ever since the days of his father and had thus developed a flair for appreciation of men and morals as possessed by few individuals. He would have surely come to the conclusion that the Shaikh was a man of different mettle from those he had come across either in the royal court or closets of the mendicants.

The following account, which unmistakably indicates Jahāngīr's feelings of thankfulness to God as well as his satisfaction, also shows the transformation of his mental attitude in the company of the Mujaddid. This incident becomes all the more significant if we also bear in mind that the Fort of Kāngra was not captured by one of the Muslim generals of

1. Q. II, 216
2. Shaikh Ahmad was released from the Gwālior Jail in Jamādus Thānī 1029/April 1620 and he left the royal camp in Dhil-Hijja, 1032/ November, 1623

Jahāngīr but by Rājā Bikramājīt.

> "On the 24th of the same month I went to see the fort of Kāngra, and gave an order that the Qāzī, the Chief Justice and other learned men of Islam should accompany me and carry out in the fort whatever was customary, according to the religion of Muhammad. Briefly, having traversed about one *kos*, I went up to the top of the fort, and by the grace of God, the call to prayer and the reading of the Khutba and the slaughter of a cow, which had not taken place from the commencement of the building of the fort till now, were carried out in my presence. I prostrated myself in thankfulness for this great gift, which no king had hoped to receive, and ordered a lofty mosque to be built inside the fort."[1]

This is an account given by an Emperor in the beginning of whose rule many mosques had been demolished and appropriated by non-Muslims without being called to account but the Muslims were put to death at Mathura by his order on the charge of having slaughtered a cow.[2]

This account is indicative of the marked change in the state policy towards Islam which gradually changed from indifference or even opposition to an earnest care and respect for Islamic rites and customs as a result of the continued effort made by the nobles and grandees, directly and indirectly, who were incessantly urged by the Mujaddid to get the Emperor interested in Islam. It was this campaign of reform and renewal which created the atmosphere which eventually enabled Shāhjahān to adopt an actively pro-Islamic policy.

Reign of Shāhjahān

Shāhjahān's (1000-1075/1592-1666) rule, known as the

1. The *Tūzuk-Jahāngīrī* (Memoirs of Jāhangīr, Tr. Alexander Rogers, edt. Henry Beveridge, (New Delhi, 1968), Vol. II. p. 223
2. *Ganj-i-Arshafi*, p. 1172, cited from *Aurangzeb and His Times.*

golden period of the Mughals, lasted for 31 years beginning from 1036/1628. The Mujaddid had died two years before Shāhjahān ascended the throne but the movement of reform and renewal touched off by him continued to bring about a gradual, though imperceptible, improvement in the administration of the country. There is no historical evidence to show that Shāhjahān had taken an oath of fealty to Shaikh Ahmad or his son Khwāja Muhammad M'asūm, but it is also an undisputed fact that he held the Shaikh in high esteem. When Jahāngīr had summoned the Mujaddid to his court, Shāhjahān had sent Afzal Khān and Muftī 'Abdur Rahmān, both of whom were affiliated to him, with certain juristic opinions and the message that the "ceremonial prostration to the kings was lawful and permitted by the jurists on certain conditions. If you could perform it on meeting the Emperor, I would see that no harm comes to you." Shaikh Ahmad had, however, rejected the plea saying that it was a leave allowed in special circumstances but the rule was that no prostration was admissible to anyone save God in any circumstances."[1]

Historians agree that Shāhjahān was kind and benevolent and held the *sharī'ah* in reverence. He was a great builder, specially of magnificent mosques; his personal life was blameless, which he led according to the dictates of the *sharī'ah*; and he used to place reliance on the advice of the scholars and the pious around him. His Prime Minister S'ad Ullah Khān 'Allāmī (d. 1066/1656) was a noted scholar and pedagogue.

Whatever the view one may take of the personal character of Shāhjahān, it can hardly be denied that there was a marked departure from the Akbar's policy of promoting eclectic pantheism. Shāhjahān's desire to maintain the strict tenets of Islam is apparent from his several measures, such as, abolition of ceremonial prostration before the king, restoration of the mosques which had been converted into temples, and liberation

1. A detailed account has already been given earlier in chapter III

of Muslim women forcibly taken into wedlock by the Hindus. "With the latitude of Akbar's religious beliefs and practices, and the looseness of Jahāngīr's court, he had no sympathy," writes Sir Richard Burn, "and his objects were primarily to restore the strict profession of Islam rather than to persecute believers in other religions." He further says, "Thus he soon abolished the ceremonial prostration before the throne which had been instituted by Akbar and maintained by Jahāngīr, and in its place prescribed forms which savoured less of divine worship. The ostentatious use of divine era instituted by Akbar ceased so far as the record of months on the coinage was concerned a few years after Shāhjahān's accession....... Inter-marriage between Hindus and Muslims which had been common in the Punjab and Kashmir, was forbidden in 1634."[1]

Several incidents of Shāhjahān's zeal for his faith have been preserved by the contemporary historians. "When the royal camp was at Gujarāt", writes the court historian, "the Saiyids and Shaikhs of the town petitioned to the Emperor stating that some of the Hindus had married Muslim women, and appropriated several mosques. Thereupon Shaikh Mahmūd Gujarātī was appointed to make enquiries, separate the Muslim wives from their Hindu husbands, and take possession of the mosques. He acted according to the order, and the mosques occupied by the Hindus were pulled down and new mosques erected in their place. Later, an order was sent throughout the Empire directing the same action to be taken in similar cases."[2]

Shāhjahān's personal conduct showed as much reverence for religion as his state policy exhibited his desire to restore the tenets of Islam in public affairs. Still, he was excessively fond of his first-born Dārā Shikoh who was impulsive and cosmopolitan by temperament and had little regard for Islam's

1. *Cambridge History of India*, Vol. IV, p. 217
2. Mohammad Wāris : *Bādshāh Nāmāh*, Vol. II, p. 58 (Bibliotheca Indica series)

creed and practices in his political decisions. He not only wanted Dārā to succeed him to the throne but was at times harsh and unjust in his dealings with Aurangzeb who was by far the ablest and most learned amongst his sons.[1] The question of succession in the monarchical forms of government, decided by personal likings of the ruling prince and artful plottings of the contenders to the throne, seldom takes into account the uprightness of personal conduct and faithfulness to one's religion. This is perhaps the reason why a virtuous ruler is oftentimes found lending his support to a corrupt and degenerate wretch.

Prince Dārā Shikoh

It would not be fair to depend on the court historians of Aurangzeb's reign for condemning Dārā Shikoh as an apostate from Islam nor the war of succession between Dārā and his brothers could be conceived as a struggle between Islam and infidelity, nor yet was it a conflict of ideologies and philosophies. Dārā's own writings, however, confirm the charge of his contemporaries, both Muslims and non-Muslims, who allege that he had discarded the essential dogmas of Islam and wanted to renew Akbar's electicism. This mystic prince had unfortunately fallen under the spell of the sufis like Miān Mīr, Mullā Shāh and Sarmad. It did not take him long to claim that he was an *'Arif Kāmil*, a knower through God, and to declare that "the wealth of divine knowledge is not bestowed on every person, but it has been bestowed especially on me".[2] By the time he was in his late twenties, he had developed hatred towards dogma and orthodoxy: he wrote to an eminent mystic saint, Shāh Dilrubā, in a letter, "Esoteric Islam has ceased to influence the mind of this meekhearted and the real esoteric infidelity has shown its face

1. Zahir Uddin Farūqī: *Aurangzeb and His Times*, see chapter I, War of Succession
2. Dārā Shikoh, *Risālā Haqnāmah*, Litho, Newal Kishore Press, p. 5

to him".[1] In his streak of egoism and self-commendation, Dārā often indulged in aphorisms and mystical utterances repugnant to Islamic beliefs and practices. He argued that distress or calamity made the prayer necessary for the immature, while an *'Arif Kāmil*, as he was, had no need of prayers. Accordingly, he had suspensed with the prayers and fasts enjoined by Islam.[2] Meanwhile, his studies of Sanskrit led him to Vedenta and Yoga philosophy, to Hindu rituals and mythology. Fascinated by mystical pantheism he wanted to renew Akbar's syncreticism. The Holy Qur'ān he found enigmatical, its meaning hidden and the Upanishads as the original revelation in which Quranic verses could be found in entirety.[3] Dārā kept the company of Brahmins, yogis and *sanyāsis* and regarded them as true masters of wisdom. As a contemporary historian has reported, "He considered their books......the word of God, and ......employed himself in translating them......More specifically, Dārā had taken up the Hindu name *Prabhu* (Lord) and inscribed it on the rings which he wore, he had given up the prayers, fasting and other obligations imposed by the law......It became manifest that if Dārā Shikoh obtained the throne and established his power, the foundations of the faith would be in danger and the precepts of Islam would be changed for the rant of infidelity and Judaism."[4]

The Muslim chroniclers' accounts could be coloured by their prejudice, but there are also corroborative evidences left

1. Fourth letter to Shāh Dilrubā in *Fāiyyāz-ul-Qawānin* cited by Bikramājit Hasrat in *Dārā Shikoh: Life and Works*, (Shanti Niketen, 1953), p. 65
2. Khafi Khān. *Muntakhab-ul-Lubāb*, Vol. I, pp. 717, 725 (Bibliotheca Indica Series; Elliot and Dowson); Muhammad Kazim's *'Ālamgīr Nāmāh)*, Vol. VII, p. 179
3. *Sirrul Asrār* (British Museum). In some Mss. the book bears the title of *Sirr-i-Akbar*. Also see *Majm'a-ul-Bahrain* by Dārā Shikoh, pp. 1, 18.
4. Mohammad Kāzim, *'Ālamgīr Nāmah*, Elliot and Dowson, Vol. VII, p. 179

by contemporary Hindu writers about the censurable beliefs and conduct of Dārā Shikoh. Sujān Singh writes in the *Khulāsat-ut-Tawārikh*, "........Dārā Shikoh being inclined towards the religion of the Hindus, associates with Brahmins, yogis, and *sanniyāsis*, and regards them as his guides and protectors, and looks upon their Books, known as Veda, as ancient and revealed from God, and spends his precious time in translating them, and composing poems in Hindi; calls them *tasawwuf*, and, instead of the name of God, he has inscribed Hindi names which denote Reflection of God to Hindus, on diamond, ruby, and other stones, and puts them on as a charm and has discarded fasting and prayers and the ways of a Musalmān; has usurped power—determined to pay respect to His Majesty."[1]

Dārā's thoughts and behaviour, portending renewal of Akbar's religious eclecticism, which were never kept secret by the conceited prince, must have caused serious misgivings to the Indian Muslim society, and provided a God-send opportunity to the practical and astute Aurangzeb to take advantage of the situation. It is also quite reasonable that the Muslim scholars, right-minded sufis and their disciples, would have recoiled in horror at the thoughts and doings of Dārā for they had been a witness to the indignities heaped on Islam and the Muslims during Akbar's time. They would have been sympathetic or rather actively helped the Prince whom they knew to be virtuous, God fearing and the defender of orthodox faith.[2]

The final outcome of the war of succession is too well known to be recounted here. Aurangzeb ascended the throne in 1068/1659 and ruled over the country for half a century.

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1. Sujan Singh, *Khulāsat-ut-Tawārikh*, p. 58 cited from *Aurangzeb and His Times*, p. 48
2. See for details Prof. Muhammd Aslam who has thrown light on the role played by the scholars and mystics in the victory of Aurangzeb in one of his essays included in the *Tārikhi Maqālāt*.

Muhyī-ud-dīn Aurangzeb 'Alamgīr

Aurangzeb had displayed a concern for the faith from the very beginning and held Shaikh Ahmad and his progeny in reverence. It is also reported that he had enlisted himself as a disciple of Khwājā Muhammad M'asūm.[1] There is also supportive evidence to show that Aurangzeb did not merely admire Khwājā Muhammad M'asūm but had accepted him as his spiritual guide. The Khwājā, on the other hand, looked affectionately upon Aurangzeb since his childhood and used to call him Shāhzāda Din Panāh (Protector-Prince of the Faith). In a letter written by Khwājā Saif-ud-dīn to his father, Khwājā Muhammad M'asūm, we find a reference to Aurangzeb's preoccupation with mystical path of spirit. He writes:

> "The King is firmly attached to your eminence. Having traversed the stages of *latā'if sittah* and *sultān-ul-azkār*, he has attained the station of negation and affirmation. As he states, more often he does not feel even a streak of dubiety and if he does feel it at any time, it is only transitory. He is much pleased with it for he used to be perplexed earlier by the state of suspense and hesitation. He is thankful to God for this favour to him."[2]

Khwājā Muhammad M'asūm offered thanks to God for the spiritual perfection of the King in his reply to the above letter. His letter also shows that Aurangzeb had by that time attained a sufficiently higher stage known as *fanā-i-qalbī* or extinction of the heart, on the path of mysticism.[2]

Abul Fath writes in the *Ādāb-i-'Ālamgiri* that "soon after Aurangzeb's accession to the throne, Khwājā Muhammad M'asūm and his elder brother Khwājā Muhammad Sa'eed paid a visit to the royal court. Aurangzeb presented three hundred gold

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1. *Maktūbāt Saifiyah*, No. 83 to Sūfī S'ad Ullah Afghānī
2. *Ibid.*, letter No. 2
2. *Maktubāt Khwājā Muhammad M'asūm*, No. 220

mohurs to them on that occasion.[1]

Professor Muhammad Aslam has also cited a number of other incidents mentioned in the *Mīrāt-ul-'A'ālam*[2] and the *Futūhāt 'Ālamgīrī*[3] which go to show that Aurangzeb was on very intimate terms[4] with the sons of Khwājā Muhammad

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1. Abul Fath, *Ādāb-i-'Ālamgīrī*, India Office Library Manuscript, No. 317, folio-B, 431; Muhammad Kāzim, *Alamgīr Nāmāh*, (Calcutta, 1868) p. 493 (cited from *Tārīkhī Maqālāt* by Prof. Muhammad Aslam).
2. The *Mirāt ul-A'ālam* by Bakhtāwar Khān is a British Museum Manuscript on universal history and describes Aurangzeb's manners and habits.
3. *Futūhāt 'Ālamgīrī* by Ishwar Dās gives very useful information about Aurangzeb's rule (British Museum Manuscript No. 23884).
4. The letters of Khwājā Saif-ud-dīn to Aurangzeb, published under the title of *Maktūbāt-i-Saifiyah* clearly indicate that the latter was not merely regardful of Khwājā Saif-ud-dīn and other members of the Mujaddiyah family as the kings and nobles usually are to eminent scholars and mystics of their time, but took the Khwājā as his spiritual guide. In a letter addressed to Khwājā Muhammad M'asūm, Khwājā Saif-ud-dīn writes:

 "I have had lengthy sittings these days with the King; some of the intricate points mentioned in the letters came under discussion and the King patiently listened to my explanations (letter No. 3)."

 In another letter written by Khwājā Muhammad M'asūm to Shaikh Muhammad Bāqar of Lahore, he writes:

 "On the Sunday night, which was the third of this month, the King dropped into my house and took whatever food was available at the time. The sitting with the King was sufficiently lengthy—we also remained silent for a time in a meditative state—, and I hope to see him undergoing the *tarīqah-i-'āliyah* (ritual of sublimity) as desired by the well-wishers (letter No. 142, pp. 168-69).

 The intimate relationship between Aurangzeb and the Mujaddiyah family appears to have been too well-known for an eminent mystic Shaikh of the Chishtiyah Nizāmiyah order, Shāh Kalīm Ullah Jahānābādī (d. 1143/1730) instructed Shaikh Nizām-ud-dīn of

(Continued on next page)

M'asūm who often used to call upon him. Aurangzeb also used to present costly gifts to them and he visited Sirhind several times to associate with Khwājā Muhammad M'asūm and his family members while on his way from Delhi to Lahore or back.

Muftī Ghulām Sarwar is on record in the *Khazīnat-ul-Asfia* that Aurangzeb repeatedly requested Khwājā Muhammad M'asūm to keep company with him but he always declined the offer, in accordance with the advice of his late father, and sent his son Khwājā Saif-ud-dīn to Delhi as his proxy. Two letters[1] included in the *Maktūbāt M'asūmiyah*, which are addressed to the Emperor, tend to show that Aurangzeb used to seek advice from Khwājā Muhammad M'asūm and also acted on it. In the next section we would show how Khwājā Saif-ud-dīn helped the king in his religious endeavours designed to make the *shar'iah* the law of the land. The collection of Khwājā Saif-ud-dīn's letters, known as the *Maktūbāt-i-Saifiyah*, includes eighteens letters[2] addressed to the king in which his attention has been drawn to the prevalent innovations that ought to be prohibited and the steps to be taken for propagation of the Holy Prophet's *sunnah* and practices of the true faith.

It is not possible to ascertain the religious motive for every action or decision taken by any king nor can they always be in accordance with the teachings of Islam. This was true only in the case of the first four right-guided caliphs and the Umayyad Caliph 'Umar b. 'Abdul 'Azīz who regarded the

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Aurangābād, in one of his letters, to exercise caution in organising musical recitations since mystics of the Mujaddiyah family were with the King in his Deccan campaign. (Prof. Khalīq Ahmad Nizāmī, *Tarīkh Mashā'ikh Chisht*, pp. 418-19.)

1. *Maktūbāt M'asāumiyah* Nos. 221, 247
2. *Maktūbāt-i-Saifiyah*, Nos. 20, 22, 23, 26, 35, 39, 56, 57, 59, 60, 67, 72, 74, 76, 80, 161, 164 and 165.

caliphate as an extension of the prophetic assignment. The things changed with the passage of time as well as under the compulsion of social and political forces but, apart from it, we can never be sure of the reliability of accounts left by the historians. It would thus be difficult to bring in any verdict on the doings of the rulers of later times with any amount of certainty. Nevertheless, the reliable historical data available about Aurangzeb speaks volumes of his concord with the objectives of reformation and renovation set afloat by Shaikh Ahmad Mujaddid Sirhindī and the active cooperation he extended to the virtuous efforts of the Shaikh's progeny in transforming the state and the society as instruments serving the cause of religion. Aurangzeb took courageous steps, for the first time in the history of India, in accordance with the ideas and ideal of the Mujaddid to rejuvenate the state and the society irrespective of the financial loss suffered by his government. How far these measures designed to reform the morals of the people and to enforce the provisions of the *sharī'ah* were successful can be seen from the following remarks of the author of *Ma'āthir-i-Alamgīrī*.

> "The innovators, atheists, heretics who had deviated from the straight path of Islam, infidels, hypocrites and the spiritually indifferent who had spread all over India—were chastised and forced to give up their wicked usages, obey theologians and observe the fasts and prayers regularly."[1]

We need not give any detailed account of the personal character and conduct of Aurangzeb who was acclaimed by his contemporary historians as a believing, pious ruler "absolutely free from vice and even from the more innocent pleasure of the idle rich."[2]

Speaking of Aurangzeb's piety and simplicity Manucci says:

> "The king.........sleeps for three hours only, on

1. Muhammad Sāqi Musta'id Khān, *Ma'āsir-i-'Ālamgīrī*, p. 93
2. Jadunath Sircar, *Cambridge History of India*, Vol. IV, p. 318

awakening offers up his usual prayers which occupy an hour and a half......Every year he goes into penitential retirement for forty days, during which he sleeps on the ground, he fasts, he gives alms......Thus in twenty-four hours his rule is to eat once and sleep three hours.[1]......His clothes are plain, he wears few ornaments......nothing but a small plume, or aigrette in the middle of his turban and a large precious stone in front. He wears no strings of pearls...... His coats are of a very moderately priced material, for each Qabā (gown) does not exceed ten rupees in cost."[2]

The last days of this *darvish* clad in the imperial purple have been thus described by the historians :

"In the fifty-first year of his rule, 1118/1707, he was smitten with fever for four days, but he performed all the five daily prayers with the congregation. He wrote a will giving directions about his last rites—I leave four and a half rupees out of my earnings by sewing caps which should be spent on the death shroud, while 805 rupees earned by copying the Qur'ān should be distributed to the poor and the needy—After morning prayers on Friday, 28th of Dhil Q'ada, fifty-first year of his kingship in 1118 A.H.,[3] he was engrossed in the recollection of God. A *pahar* of the day later the rosary fell silent as God answered his prayers."[4]

There was not a field of activity—political, social, fiscal and moral—in which Aurangzeb did not try to bring out improvements. Here we would mention some of his edicts which were issued with the object of ensuring deference due to the

1. Niccolo Manucci, *Storia do Mogor*, (first three volumes translated by William Irvine, London, 1907; fourth volume translated by John Murray, London, 1908), Vol. II, p. 332
2. *Ibid.*, II, p. 342
3. 3rd March, 1707
4. *Ma'āsir-i-'Ālamgīrī*, p. 519 (Will of Aurangzeb)

sharī'ah and Islamic practices.

Describing the events pertaining to the second year of Aurangzeb's reign (1069/1659), Khafī Khān writes:

> "Since the reign of Emperor Akbar the official year of account and the years of the reign had been reckoned from the 1st Farwardi, when the sun enters Aries, to the end of Isfandār, and the year and its months were called Ilāhī; but as this resembled the system of the fire worshippers, the Emperor, in his zeal for upholding Islamic rule, directed that the year of the reign should be reckoned by the Arabic lunar year and months, and that in the revenue accounts also the lunar year should be preferred to the solar. The festival of the (solar) new year was entirely abolished......... (All) know that.........the recurrence of the four seasons, summer, winter, the rainy season of Hindustān, the autumn and spring harvests, the ripening of the corn and fruit of each season, the *tankhwāh* of the *jāgīrs*, and the money of the *mansabdārs*, are all dependent upon the solar reckoning, and cannot be regulated by the lunar; still his religious Majesty was unwilling that the *nauroz* and the year and months of the Magi should give their names to the anniversary of his accession."[1]

Khafi Khan goes on further to say:

> "To comfort the people and alleviate their distress, the Emperor gave order for the remission of the *rāhdārī* (toll) which was collected on every highway (*guzar*), frontier and ferry, and brought in large sums to the revenue. He also remitted the *pāndāri*, a ground or house cess, which was paid throughout the imperial dominions by every tradesman and dealer, from the butcher, the potter, and the green-grocer, to the draper, jeweller, and banker....... The

1. Khafī Khān, *Muntakhab-ul-Lubāb*, Vol. II, pp. 77-79 (Elliot and Dawson, Vol. VII, pp. 241-42)

> tax on spirits, on gambling houses, on brothels, the fines, thanks-givings, and the fourth part of debts recovered by the help of magistrates from creditors. These and other imposts, nearly eighty in number, which brought in crores of rupees to the public treasury were all abolished throughout Hindustān."[1]

Soon after his second coronation anniversary Aurangzeb issued a number of ordinances for restoring the rules of Islam in the administration and bringing the lives of the people into closer accord with the moral teachings of the Qur'ān. Almost every historian of Aurangzeb's time reports the appointment of Mullā 'Ewaz Wajīh, an eminent Turānī scholar, as the censor, with the rank of the commander of one thousand horse. A party of *mansabdārs* and *ahadīs* was placed under him and the provincial governors were directed to assist Mullā 'Ewaz Wajīh in the work of moral reform of the people within their own jurisdictions.[2]

The annals for the years from the eleventh to the twenty-first year of Aurangzeb's regnal year include several regulations promulgated with the object of enforcing the rules of the *shar'īah*. Khafī Khān writes in the *Muntakhab-ul-Lubāb*.

> "The king of happy disposition strove earnestly from day to day to put in force the rules of the law, and to maintain the Divine commands and prohibitions ......The minstrels and singers of reputation in the service of the court were made ashamed of their occupation, and were advanced to the dignity of *mansabs*. Public proclamations were made prohibiting singing and dancing......In the reigns of former kings, upto this year, the *jharoka-darshan* had been a regular institution. His religious Majesty looked upon this as among the forbidden and unlawful practices,

1. Khafī Khān, *Muntakhab-ul-Lubāb*, Vol. VII, p. 87 (Elliot & Dawson, p. 247).
2. *'Ālamgīr Nāmāh*, pp. 390-97; *Mira'āt Ahmadī*, pp 263-4, *Storia*, ii, pp.5-7

so he left off sitting in the window, and forbade the assembling of the crowd beneath it."[1]

The Muslim rulers of India had come to place reliance on astrologers and horoscopists like the Hindu rājās of old; the astrologers were considered an integral part of the Mughal emperor's entourage. They decided all questions pertaining to the selection of the proper time for doing things which were considered to depend upon the selection of the proper astronomical movement. In the year 1087/1675, according to Khafī Khān, "Aurangzeb forbade all this. He abolished the custom of composing and reciting verses, of selecting the moment for doing things on the basis of astronomical calculations."[2] "They were also bound down to furnish securities for not drawing up almanacs."[3]

The administration of justice had been the preserve of civil administrators and military officers during the Mughal period. "Aurangzeb established the Qāzī so firmly", writes Khafī Khān, "in the affairs of the state and with reference to the general principles as well as the details of administration, that the leading and responsible officers of the empire began to regard them with envy and jealousy."[4]

As it was the great object of Aurangzeb that all Muslims should follow the principles of religion as expounded by the most competent jurists and the law officers should not feel difficulty in administering the canonical laws, he took the initiative of getting a digest of Muslim Law compiled by competent

1. Khafī Khān, *Muntakhab-ul-Lubāb*, Vol. II, p. 211 ff. (Elliot and Dowson, Vol. VII, pp. 283-84)
2. *Ibid.*, Vol. II, p. 215, (A. J. Syed Bombay, 1977, p. 247)
3. Muhammad. Sāqī Musta'id Khān, *Ma'āsir-i-'Ālamgīrī*, pp. 75, 81, *Ruqa'āt 'Ālamgīrī*, No. 78
4. Khafī Khān, *Muntakhab-ul-Lubāb*, p. 216 (A. J. Syed, p. 248); Jadunath Sircar, *History of Aurangzeb*, Vol. III, p. 74; Zahir-ud-din Farūqī, *Aurangzeb and His Times*, pp. 559-62

scholars. He appointed a Board of experts to compile a standard canon in order to provide an easy and available means of ascertaining the proper and authoritative legal opinion alongwith the sources from which these precedents were derived. The chief editor of the digest, appointed in the very beginning of Aurangzeb's rule, was Shaikh Nizām-ud-dīn of Burhānpūr who was assisted in the task by a number of eminent scholars of Hanafite persuation.[1] This digest known as the *Fatāwah-i-'Ālamgīrī* in India and the *Fatāwah-i-Hindīyah* in Egypt, Syria and Turkey is still regarded as a work of outstanding merit and importance. It was completed in six volumes at a cost of more than rupees two lacs.[2]

An act of greater courage was the proclamation made by Aurangzeb that he was prepared to meet all the *shara'ī* and civil claims against him. Reporting the events pertaining to the period between eleventh and the twenty-first regnal year Khafi Khān says: "In this year owing to his concern for righteousness and justice, Aurangzeb ordered a proclamation to be issued at the court and the cities, 'Every one, who had any civil or *shara'ī* claim against the Emperor, was to present himself before the *vakīl* of Emperor, and obtain his claim after proving his case.' Aurangzeb also ordered a *vakīl-i-shara'ī* to be appointed on behalf of the Emperor in the court and each of the territories far and near in order to deal with the claims of the people who were unable to approach the Emperor themselves."[3]

It had long been customary with those attending the Mughal Court to salute the Emperor by lowering their heads and touching it with the hands several times. These practices, although

1. Hakīm Saiyid Abdul Ha'ī has given the names of twenty scholars selected for the compilation of the *Fatāwah* (*As-Thaqāfat-il-Islāmīyah fil Hind*, Damascus, pp. 110-111).
2. Bhaktāwar Khān, *Mirāt-i-'Ālam* (Elliot and Dowson, Vol. VII, pp.159-160)
3. Khafi Khān, *Muntakhab-ul-Lubāb*, Vol. II, p.248 (A.J. Syed, p. 271)

against the precepts of the *sharī'ah,* had been accepted no less by the learned and the mystics than the nobles and grandees of the state. It has been reported by the historians that "during the same period an order was issued that when Musalmāns met the king they were to greet him with the *salām* prescribed by the *sharī'ah* and not to raise their hands to their heads like infidels; the officers were also to behave in the same way towards persons of distinction as well as the generality of the people."[1]

The steps taken by Aurangzeb to enforce the rules of the *sharī'ah* and the orders and prohibitions of God earned him the title of "Muhyi-ud-dīn", the vivifier of faith, from the people desirous to see Islam strong and vigorous in India. Dr. Sir Mohammad Iqbāl, who had a deep insight into the conflicting features of the ancient Indian religious thought and philosophy and the ideas and ideals of Islam as well as the vital role of the latter in shaping the future of the country, deemed Aurangzeb to be one of the protectors of true faith in India. The writer of these lines had met the Poet of East at his residence on 22nd November, 1937 and recorded in his reminiscence of the meeting that:

> "Coming to the topic of Islamic revival and renovation in India, the 'Allāma paid glowing tributes to Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindi, Shāh Walīullah, and Emperor Muhyi-ud-dīn Aurangzeb and remarked that but for these great men and their Herculean efforts, Islam would have been assimilated in India by the Hindu culture and philosophy."[2]

Iqbāl has also summed up his feelings of admiration and gratitude to the great Emperor in these lines included in the

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1. Khafi Khān, *Muntakhab-ul-Lubāb*, Vol. II, p.248 (A.J. Sayed. p.271), p. 271; Muhammad Sāqī Musta'id Khān, *Maāsir i-Ālamgīrī*, p.98
2. For a detailed discussion of Aurangzeb's religious reforms see Jadunath Sarkar's *Aurangzeb*, Vol. III and *Aurangzeb* by Stanley Lane-Poole.

Ramūz-i-Bekhudī.

'Ālamgīr, the king of heavenly abode, the glory of Timurid lineage,
To him is due the respect paid to Muslims and to the Prophet's law, the homage.

He was our last shot in the battle of religion and misbelief,
When Dārā came forth in the cast of Akbar's seed of disbelief.

Hearts had ceased to be radiant within the breasts and the *millat* was in despair,
Thence God picked up 'Ālamgīr, the mendicant with a trusty sabre.

To revive the faith and renew conviction, he was charged,
His luminous sword illumined our company and the seat of *kufr* was scorched.

Unable to fathom his wisdon, the blockheads took to prattle,
Enamoured of *tauhīd*, he was like Ibrāhīm in the idol-temple.

Exalted among the kings, from his grave his mendicity is visible.

The ideas and ideals of the Mujaddid gradually took root within the country through the efforts of his purehearted spiritual successors, specially Khwājā Muhammad M'asūm and Saiyid Ādam Binnaurī, until, by the twelfth century, this country became a lighthouse of spiritual and intellectual enlightenment amidst the gloom encompassing the world of Islam. A network of hospices run by mystics belonging to the Mujaddidyah order came into existence which attracted people from the lands, far and near, for obtaining spiritual guidance as well as instruction in the *hadīth* and other branches of Islamic learning.

CHAPTER IX

NOTABLE ADVERSARIES OF SHAIKH AHMAD

The character and thought of Shaikh Ahmad Mujaddid Sirhindi discussed earlier bring out his achievements which are definitely great and outstanding, but this appraisal would remain incomplete if a mention is not made of his adversaries who started opposing him in his own lifetime. Certain writings of the Mujaddid in his letters and other works, explaining higher reaches of the spiritual realm, did give rise to discordant notes against him.

The lasting fame and popularity achieved by the Mujaddid during his lifetime raised his prestige outside the country no less than the recognition accorded to him in the intellectual and ruling circles of India. Nevertheless, some of his teachings were so unfamiliar to the people in general that even the learned among them found it hard to accept them. They were shocked by his views which were against the accepted thought and inherited custom of the community. This reaction was not unusual: all those

who are endowed with a nimble mind and vital impulse have to go beyond the current norms of thought and practice with the result that they find themselves at odds with their contemporaries. The Mujaddid had been preaching against the so-called virtuous innovations, respectful prostration to the mystic guides, musical recitation normally accepted as a means of inducing ecstasy, verbal repetition of the *niyat* (intention) before the prayers, congregational prayers of *tahajjud*, celebrations in connection with the prophet's birthday, infallibility of intuitive insights and spiritual knowledge of the mystics as against the legal pronouncements of the celebrated jurists and similar other practices in vogue among almost all the sufi orders of his day which were then employed for drawing out the deepest spiritual emotions. And, to crown it all, he had the courage to criticise the Shaikh Akbar and his doctrine of Unity of Being which was then accepted as the acme of spiritual perfection and the highest achievement of gnostic intuition. He went even a step further and presented his own finding —the doctrine of *Wahdat-us-shuhūd*—as a parallel mystical experience to that of Shaikh Akbar. It would have really been surprising—an event unheard of in the history of revivalist movements or even arts and literature—if no dissenting voice had been raised towards the end of his life span or immediately after his death.

The opposition to the Mujaddid can be classified under two broad headings: one of it was caused either by misunderstanding or deliberate misrepresentation of his teachings and it vanished as soon as the misapprehension was removed or the false construction put on his ideas was detected. The second type of antagonism was the product of a contrary belief or thought or else a personal antipathy to him.

The friction between the Mujaddid and Shaikh 'Abdul Haq Muhaddith Dihlawī (d. 1052/1642), a sincere and pious scholar, falls under the first category. He was also one of the spiritual successors of Khwājā Bāqī Billāh and thus allied to the Mujaddid, but he expressed surprise and resentment on

certain views and statements of the Mujaddid and came out with them in one of his letters addressed to the latter.[1] The views, attributed to the Mujaddid in the letter of Shaikh 'Abdul Haq Muhaddith Dihlawī, have been found to be incorrect or distorted by those who have studied it at length. Actually this was a personal letter written by Shaikh 'Abdul Haq to a colleague and it was not included by him in the compilation of his epistles known as the *Al-Makātib wal-Rasā'il*. According to Mīrzā Mazhar Jānjānān Shaikh 'Abdul Haq had even directed his successors to destroy this letter.

The underlying idea in the letter of Shaikh 'Abdul Haq was that certain statements of the Mujaddid were contemptuous of the great precursors who were unanimously held in esteem by the entire community. This letter has, however, been examined more than once and the contention of Shaikh 'Abdul Haq has been refuted by several scholars. The letters of the Mujaddid as well as his life-long endeavours give a lie to the charge against him. An important reason for Shaikh 'Abdul Haq's opposition to Shaikh Ahmad was his unbounded devotion and love for Shaikh 'Abdul Qādir Jīlānī who has been, in a unique way, the inspirer of millions. Shaikh 'Abdul Haq shared the ardent affection evoked by the lovesome spirituality of Shaikh 'Abdul Qādir in the hearts of vast numbers and thus he could not countenance what he considered as the assertion of anybody's superiority over Shaikh 'Abdul Qādir. This point has also been extensively dealt with by several writers in a satisfactory manner.

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1. Professor Khalīq Ahmad Nizāmī has given the full text of this letter in his "*Hayāt Shaikh 'Abdul Haq*" (pp. 312-344). Several brochures have since been written to confute the charges levelled by Shaikh 'Abdul Haq by persons like Shaikh Badr-ud-dīn Sirhindi, Shaikh Muhammad Yahyā (youngest son of Shaikh Ahmad), Shaikh Muhammad Farrukh, Shāh 'Abdul 'Azīz Muhaddith Dihlawī, Qazi Thanā Ullah Pānīpatī and Shaikh Ghulām 'Alī Dihlawī. A larger volume consisting of 336 pages was written by Vakīl Ahmad of Sikandarpūr under the title of the *Hadiyah-i-Mujaddidyah*.

It is not necessary to re-examine Mujaddid's letter in question or the different issues that arise from it for one can go throngh the writings on the subject, some of which have been mentioned earlier. These studies prove, beyond any shadow of doubt, that most of the statements attributed to the Mujaddid were deliberate perversions or, at best, misconstructions on his sententious expressions. It is rather surprising how Shaikh 'Abdul Haq allowed himself to accept such reports and quoted them in his letter. Shāh Ghulām 'Alī Dihlawī who is typically solemn and soberminded has after citing such concocted passages expressed his surprise in these words: "God forbid! What a monstrous lie and fake material! None of the Mujaddid's letters include these passages. May Allah forgive the Shaikh."

Since, however, Shaikh 'Abdul Haq's criticism of the Mujaddid was motivated by his sincerity and zeal for religion, he lost no time in making amends as soon as his misunderstanding was removed. His subsequent letters to the Mujaddid as well as other contemporary mystics bespeak of his admiration and high regard for the latter.[1] In one of his letters written after his retraction from the criticism against the Mujaddid, Shaikh 'Abdul Haq wrote to Khwājā Hosām-ud-dīn of Delhi.

> "May Allah keep you well and allow your sincere disciples to enjoy your gracious patronage. The reason for not being able to ascertain about your health during the last two or three days was either because of my sluggishness, a common human weakness, or my assumption that you would be alright in a few days. I hope that you would now let me know about your health.
>
> "I am looking forward to the happy tidings from

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1. It is interesting to see how a modern scholar who has treated Shaikh Abdul Haq's letter criticising Shaikh Ahmad at some length, dismisses the reproachment between the two with a skeptical note. See pp.87-90 of Friedman's *Shaykh Ahmad Sirhindī.*

Shaikh Ahmad. I hope that the invocations of his adorers would be answered by God, and they would surely be efficacious. *This poorling is nowadays feeling a close spiritual affinity with him*; nothing of human dispositions and mental attitudes stand in-between us. I do not know why it is so. But apart from it, the right and proper course as well as the way dictated by prudence is that one should not bear any ill-will against such a venerable person. I find my own heart so very inclined towards him that it is difficult to express my attachment to him in words. God alone is capable of inclining the hearts and changing dispositions. Those who cannot see beyond the external appearances would not believe it, but I myself do not know what has happened to me and how it has come about. God knows best the truth of the matter."[1]

We may now turn to an Arab scholar of Hijāz, Shaikh Hasan al-Ujaimī,[2] who respresents the second group of Shaikh Ahmad's opponents. In the introduction of his book entitled

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1. Shāh Naym Ullah of Bahraich, *Bashārāt-i-Mazhariya*, Nadwatul 'Ulamā Library Manuscript No. *Tarikh* (33535) 1591. It was written in 1281/1864.
2. He was a teacher of *hadīth* in Medina, and a renowned Hanafite theologian of his time. He was the teacher of Shaikh Abū Tāhir Kurdī, under whom Shāh Walīullah had studied *hadīth*. Shāh Walīullah introduces him in the *Anfās-ul-'Ārafīn* as a teacher of *hadīth* and a man of encyclopedic knowledge. He was a fluent speaker with good memory and a close associate of Shaikh 'Isā al-Maghribī but was also friends with Shaikh Ahmad Qashāshī, Shaikh Muhammad bin 'Alā Bāblī and Shaikh Zainal 'Abidīn b. 'Abdul Qādir Tabarī, a Shāf'ite jurist. He had also been associated with the mystics like Shāh Ni'amat Ullah Qādirī and practised the methods employed to attain spiritual concentration. His favourite student was Shaikh Abū Tāhir Kurdī, the teacher of Shāh Walī Ullah. In his old age he had given up his residence at Mecca and led a secluded life at Tā'if where he died in 1113/1701. He was buried near the tomb of 'Abdullah b. 'Abbās. (*Anfās-ul-'Ārifīn*, pp. 186-7). In the *Al-'Ālām*, Khair-ud-dīn al-Zarkalī

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As-Sārim al-Hindī fī Jawāb-i-Sawāl 'an Kalamāt-i-Sirhindī,[1] it has been stated that a juristic opinion has been sought from the scholars of Mecca and Medina in regard to certain heterodox statements made by Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindī in his letters. "The enquirers have asked," he writes, "to expound the view of the *sharī'ah* about any one making such unsound statements, or giving tongue to them, or entertaining a belief in them, or else preaching them." Thereafter, the author says, "my revered teacher Shaikh Mullā Ibrāhīm b. Hasan Kaurānī directed me to write a rejoinder giving legal opinions on the subject and also to mention the opinions expressed on the subject by other scholars of the two holy cities." Shaikh Hasan has also copied the legal opinions of his teachers, Mullā Ibrāhīm Kaurānī of Medina and Saiyid Jamāl-ud-dīn Muhammad b. 'Abd ur-Rasūl al-Barzanjī in his book.

It would be of interest to know something about the two scholars quoted by Shaikh Hasan. The former, that is, Mullā Ibrahīm Kaurānī of Medina finds a mention in the *Anfās-ul-'Ārifīn* of Shāh Walīullah. He was father of Shaikh Abū Tāhir Kurdī, the scholar under whom Shāh Walīullah studied *hadīth*. He had accused an eminent scholar and mystic of his time, Shaikh Yahyā Shawī, of having anthropomorphic view of God for which he was turned out of his court by a minister

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has stated that he was a non-Arab whose father's name was 'Alī b. Yahyā, and his patronymic name was Abu'l Baqā. The year of his birth is given in it as 1049/1639. (*Al 'Ālam*, Vol. II, p. 223).

1. Arabic manuscript No. 2753, Khudā Bakhsh library, Bankīpūr, Patna. The manuscript is a copy from the author's own dissertation by Shaikh Sulaimān Jīwā. Another incomplete manuscript of it (included in the *Qadh-us-Zand*, No. 224) is to be found in the Āsafia Library under the title of *Al-'Asb al-Hindī* but the name of the book has not been given by the copyist. Two other books confuting Shaikh Ahmad, present in the Āsafia Library, are by Muhammad al-Barzanjī (Mss. No. 223 and 224 under the *Kalām* section).

of the Turkish Empire. The incident is but an example of his being rash and short-tempered. Saiyid Muhammad al-Barzanji[1], the second jurist cited by Shaikh Hasan in his support, is stated to be sulky by Shāh Walīullah.

It is also noteworthy that in a *fatwā* the legal position stated in the light of Islamic law by a jurisconsult is always based on facts narrated by an inquirer. The jurists are not judges, nor do they have time and resources to record the evidences or make personal enquiries before giving their opinions. It is also not incumbent on them to find out whether the oral or written statements attributed to a certain person and submitted to them for legal opinion are correct or not. Thus, there is every reason to believe that the above-mentioned jurisconsults would not have gone through the *Maktūbāt* of Shaikh Ahmad. It would have not been possible for them to spare some of their time spent in studies and teaching, to make enquiries about the beliefs and statements attributed to Shaikh Ahmad. There was no scholar having first-hand information about Shaikh Ahmad in Mecca or Medina in those days.

As for the mental grasp, truthfulness and conscientiousness of the inquirer seeking juristic opinion about Shaikh Ahmad is concerned, only one example is enough to illustrate his ignorance and improbity. The observation of Shaikh Ahmad about the essence of the K'aba affirmed by him as divulging spiritual secrets, has been interpreted by the inquirer as his denial to recognise its present structure as the sacred mosque which amounted to infidelity. He says in his presentment that one of his unsound utterances is the denial of the present, well-

1. Muhammad b. 'Abdur Rasūl al-Barzanjī was born in 1040/1630 and died in 1103/1691. He belonged to Shehrzor but later on settled down in Medina. He wrote a book on Ibn 'Arabī, known as the *Hall-i-Mushkilāt Ibn 'Arabi*, and another to refute Shaikh Ahmad under the title of the *Qadh-us-Zand*. For details *see* Shaikh 'Abdullah Murād Abul Khair's *Al Mukhtasar min Kitāb Nasr an-Nūr Waz-Zahr.*

known edifice of K'aba as the sacred mosque.

This assertion can now be compared with the fascination and zeal expressed by Shaikh Ahmad for paying a visit to the holy mosque written in a letter to Shaikh Tāj-ud-dīn of Sanbhal just after the latter's return from the pilgrimage.

> "Just as the K'aba is, in the estimation of this humble self, the object of prostration for all forms and bodies created by God (whether they be human beings or angels), its essence is also the sanctorum of divine service for the essences of all forms and bodies. Its reality surpasses all realities and its perfection predominates over all the realities of other things. It is like an intervening stage between the realities of the world and the celestial realities."[1]

The instance cited here fully illustrates the worth and soundness of the *fatawā* based on linguistically strained or even wilfully misrepresented writings of Shaikh Ahmad. Still, the jurists who declared Shaikh Ahmad to be an infidel also said that:

> "However, it is not improbable that God might have bestowed His favour on the believer in these doctrines and the scriber of these writings, and he might have died as a true believer. This is what so often happens to His bondsmen: for, thus He demonstrates His mercy on several occasions. One of the grounds supporting this assumption is that some of his progeny who came for pilgrimage to the holy cities exprssed their desire to qualify for the academic degree in *hadīth*, and they told that their spiritual way consisted of following the *sunnah* of the Prophet and walking in his footsteps. They obtained the certificates of proficiency from the scholars of *hadīth* like Imām Zainul 'Abidīn Tabarī, and so highly satisfied and pleased was our Shaikh 'Isā Muhammad b. al-Maghribī J'afrī with them that he got himself initiated

1. *Maktūbāt*, Vol. I, No.263

in the Naqshbandiyah order with a view to receiving the blessings of venerated mystics among the ancestors of the latter."[1]

The author's solicitude for truthfulness is as much apparent from this quotation as it shows that his legal statements were based on distorted facts presented to him. It also divulges the diffidence of the jurisconsult in pronouncing an opinion hostile to Shaikh Ahmad, which, ultimately, had to be amended because of the noble behaviour and spiritual attainments of Khwājā Muhammad M'asūm as later on witnessed by him in the two holy cities. In fact, one of the respected scholars of the place, Shaikh 'Isa al-Maghribī took the oath of fealty on the hands of Khwājā M'asūm and was initiated in the Naqshbandiyah order. Shah Walīullah writes about Shaikh 'Isa al-Maghribī in the *Anfās ul-'Ārifin* :

"In all respects he was a well-read scholar and teacher of great many theologians of the two holy cities. He was a colossus of knowledge pertaining to *hadīth* and *qirāt*. Saiyid Umar Bā Hasan used to say that if anybody wanted to see a saint, he ought to meet him."[2]

Shortly thereafter a scholar belonging to the Mujaddidyah order, Muhammad Beg al-Uzbeki went to Hijāz from India. He wrote *'Atiyāt al-Wahhāb al-Fāsalah bayna al-Khatā' wa al-Sawāb* to defend Shaikh Ahmad in which he demonstrated that the condemnation of Shaikh Ahmad was based on faulty translations and wilful misinterpretation of his writings. He cited several examples of such misrenderings with the result that a number of scholars in Arabia abandoned their erroneous notions and wrote books in the defence of Shaikh Ahmad. One of those who supported Muhammad Beg was Hasan b. Muhammad Murād Ullah al-Tūnisī al-Makkī whose *'Al-'Arf al-Nadī fī Nusrat-al-Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindī* brings out the unreliable

1. Mss. *Al-Sarim al-Hindī*, p.2
2. *Anfās al-'Ārifin*, p. 183

testimony of wrong and misleading translations on which the campaign against Shaikh Ahmad was based by his detractors. Ahmad al-Yashīshī al-Misrī al-Azhari expressed his conviction that the Mujaddid had been condemned by certain scholars owing to their insufficient knowledge to understand the mystic terms used by the Shaikh or an erroneous conception of his thought. Muhammad Beg even defended Shaikh Ahmad in debates with the scholars of Hijāz which went a long way in clearing the mist of misunderstanding against the Mujaddid spread by al-Barzanjī with the result that he had ultimately to write *An-Nāshirah al-Nājirah lil-Firqah al-Fājirah* in which he speaks of Muhammad Beg with scorn and contempt.

In India the *Ma'ārij ul-Wilāyāh*[1] by Shaikh 'Abdullah Khesgī Qusurī (1043-1106/1633-1695) is a representative document showing the trend of thought among the sections not favourably inclined to the Mujaddid. Khesgī who was also known by the name of 'Abdī[1], was a prolific writer, having several works to his credit, and a theologian allied to the Chishtiyah order. He was strongly inclined to the doctrine of Unity of Being. Khesgī's teachers and mystic guides were mostly those who were opposed to the Mujaddid and had already signed the *fatwā* condemning him as a non-conformist. Some of them like Shaikh Ni'amat Ullah of Lahore and Qāzī Nūr ud-dīn, the Qāzī of Qusūr, seem to be unduly impressed by the *Qadh-us-Zand* whose author was then staying at Aurangābād.[2] Khesgī wrote *Ma'ārij ul Wilāyah* in the same city in 1096/1688 by making use of another contemporary but apparently anonymous work entitled *Kāsīr ul-Mukhālifīn*, which had been written to confute Shaikh Ahmad and his followers.

1. The author has seen a manuscript of the book in the personal library of Prof. Khalīq Ahmad Nizāmī. Another copy of the book is stated to be extant in Lahore.
2. For details see *Ahwāl-o-Āthār 'Abdullah Khesgī Kasurī* by Muhammad Iqbāl Mujaddidī. The book has been published by the Dār-al-Muwarrikhīn, Lahore.

Khesgī's *Ma'ārij ul-Wilāyah* evinces little scholarship and coherent thought as it would be seen by the few extracts of the book given here. Amongst the things considered objectionable by him, one is that the Mujaddid did not consider it necessary to repeat the words of *niyat* or intention before offering a prayer. He writes:

> "When he stood up for prayer, often he contemplated the *niyat* in his mind without repeating the formula, and claimed that it was the custom of the holy Prophet. He claimed that intention was a settling of purpose in the heart rather than something to be repeated by the tongue."

How deeply had Khesgī studied the *Maktūbāt* and what sense of responsibility he exhibited in attributing ideas and statements to the Mujaddid can be seen from the following extract taken from the *Ma'ārij ul-Wilāyah*:

> "Among the mystics of old those giving faith to the Unity of Being, such as Husain Mansūr, Shaikh Muhyi-ud-dīn Ibn 'Arabī and others, are regarded by him as agnostics and disbelievers. He has, on several occasions, denounced Muhyi-ud-dīn Ibn 'Arabī as an apostate, attributed the beliefs of the M'utazilah to him, yet, he has also listed him amongst the elects of God in the *Maktūbāt* compiled in three volumes."

Nowithstanding his criticism of the Mujaddid, Khesgī also pays tribute to him for his piety and spiritual attainments. He writes;

> "(Hazrat Khwājā Bāqī Billāh) had given him leave to guide the seekers of truth whereby he imparted instruction in divinity to those who sought guidance from him; led the people to the way of God; instructed them to follow the commandments of the *sharī'ah;* denounced those who did not live up to the demands of the law of Islam; and was pleased with those who walked on the path shown by the *sharī'ah.*"

Khesgī appears, at several places in his writtings, to be

favourably inclined to the Mujaddid and even defends him by contradicting the constructions put upon the Mujaddid's writings by his opponents. He reproduces a number of passages from the *Maktūbāt* held objectionable by the adversaries of the Mujaddid and then goes on to say:

> "It is, however, not at all necessary that these passages should be deemed to express the external *(zāhir)* sense of the words; if he intented, as already explained earlier, to convey some internal *(bātin)* significance......he should neither be blamed nor held up to reprobation."

But the surrounding influence and the common talk he had swallowed soon make him to sing a different tune.

> "Nonetheless, the fact of the matter is that any pronouncement which can be construed as disrespectful to the holy Prophet can never be deemed to be free from blame or guilt."

One of the reasons for attaching undue importance to the *Ma'ārij ul-Wilāyah* and its publicity is that the book is supposed to preserve the text of a decree of Shaikh-ul-Islam[1] sent to Hidāyat Ullah, the *Qādī* of Aurangābād, on the direction of Aurangzeb. This decree, claimed to have been sealed by Shaikh-ul-Islām and issued on Shawwāl 27, 1090/December 1, 1679, directed the *qādī* to curb the ideas apparently opposed to the views of *ahl al-sunnah wal jamā'āh* which were reported to be contained in the *Maktūbāt*, and to check their publication among the people.

The decree has been given undue importance in certain

1. Son of Qāzī 'Abdul Wahhāb was appointed as Shaikh ul-Islām by Aurangzeb in the year 1086/1675. In 1094/1686 the Shaikh resigned his exalted office and proceeded to Arabia for performing the pilgrimage. Aurangzeb exerted pressures on him to resume the office once again but the Shaikh did not accept his offer. Khafī Khān speaks of his piety and virtue in the *Muntakhab-ul-Lubāb* in his narration of the events from the eleventh to the twenty-first regnal year.

modern dissertations as if it were a discovery of unusual significance which demolishes the whole edifice of the devotional attitude of Aurangzeb to the Mujaddid and his spiritual affiliation with the Mujaddid's descendants. One may refer to a recent work, the *Shaykh Ahmad Sirhindī* by a Jewish orientalist of Germany, Yohanan Friedmann, by way of example, who speaks of irrefutable historical authenticity of this document merely because (1) *Ma'ārij al-Wilāyah* was written in Aurangābād, the city to which the decree is claimed to have been despatched, (2) references to the decree are found in two more contemporary works and (3) the non-existence of any writing by a partisan of the Mujaddid rejecting it as a forged document. The two additional contemporary works cited in support, which make a reference to the document are the *Qadh-us-Zand* and the *An-Nāshirah al-Nājirah*, which were written by Muhammad b. 'Abdur-Rasūl al-Barzanjī. The first of two works, *Qadh-us-Zand wa Fadah al-Rand fi Radd Jihālat Ahl al-Sirhind* is an Arabic work completed on Rajab 13, 1093 (July 20, 1682), according to Friedmann. As Friedmann says the book was written to answer the *istiftā* (questionnaire) sent by the 'Qādī of India' styled as *qādī al-qudāt bid-dayār al-hindiyah* who was probably the same person referred to in the decree as Shaikh-ul-Islām. It is also claimed in the *Qadh-us-Zand* that the enquirer sent the questions for legal opinion upon the instructions of the Emperor. Were it so, Al-Barzanji would have been in direct contact with the person issuing the said decree, yet he fails to give its text although he reproduces all the other questions said to have been referred to the scholars of Mecca and Medina for juristic opinion. *As-Sārim al-Hindi* was also allegedly written by Shaikh Hasan Ujaimi in response to the *istiftā'* from Indian scholars but it spoke neither of the *qādī al-qudāt* nor of any decree issued by him. This leads to one conclusion only and it is that either the *istiftā'* was not sent by the *qādī* of India but by somebody else in his name or that no text of the decree existed by that time which would have

surely been sent along with the *istiftā'* as a weighty document in support of the alleged claims against the Mujaddid. The other book *an-Nāshirah al-Nājirah lil-Firqah al-Fājirah* was completed by al-Barzanjī on Muharram 7, 1095/December 26, 1683, that is, two years after the first one was written to counter the pro-Mujaddid campaign launched in Hijāz. In this book, too, he just mentions the existence of the said decree. Incidently, this reduces Friedmann's two contemporary authorities to one only since both were written by the same author. However, against this solitary witness supporting Khesgī, none of the historians of Aurangzeb's time make any reference to the decree of the highest religious and judicial authority of the country although they report such trivial matters as funeral procession of music *(rāg)* taken out by the musicians and prohibition of the *t'aziā* procession following an altercation between two parties at Burhānpūr[1]. The decree in question does not also find a place in the published and unpublished collections of Aurangzeb's edicts, nor Friedmann has given any reason for this omission in the meticulously recorded annals of the time. On the other hand, Friedmann brushes aside the voluminous evidence of intimate relationship between Aurangzeb and the descendents of the Mujaddid just by a casual remark that the whole affair is a matter of controversy.

The so-called decree issued by the *qādī* of India begins with the words, "It has reached this august and holy location that some passages in the *Maktūbāt* of Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindī are apparently opposed to the views of *ahl-al-sunnah wal-jamā'at.*" Unlike his predecessors, Aurangzeb was widely read and an accurate scholar who kept up his love of books to his dying day. His extensive correspondence proves his mastery of Arabic and Persian literature, both secular and sacred. His interest in mystical discipline and association with the saintly men of God of his time are facts too well-known to every historian of

1. *'Muntakhab-ul-Lubāb*, pp. 213-14

the Mughal period. It would, therfore, be unreasonable to suppose that Aurangzeb was not conversant with the writings of the Mujaddid which had been deliberated upon by a large number of scholars of India and the holy cities ever since they had been penned by the Mujaddid, nor did he care to go through the book adversely reported to him despite his deep interest in all matters pertaining to religion. It is equally fallacious to suppose that Aurangzeb would have given orders to curb its contents just on hearsay reports. In fact, had any such report been received by Aurangzeb, the religious aspect of the matter could never have escaped his notice for there was hardly any one more competent than he to bring in a verdict on the falseness or otherwise of the contents of the *Maktūbāt.* In any case the order would have never been issued on the basis of reports reaching 'his august and holy location'; it would have rather been his own judgement to curb the publication of the *Maktūbāt* throughout his kingdom than in Aurangābād only. After a similar incident of local nature already referred to earlier, Aurangzeb had issued orders to all the *subās* prohibiting the manufacture and taking out of the *t'aziā* (of Imām Husain) instead of issuing a prohibitory order for Burhānpūr only.

Even if we assume that the decree in question is authentic, its importance has evidently been overestimated to strain the truth. The primary business of a king, even if he were religious-minded like Aurangzeb, would be to see that the people did not fall into polemical wranglings and mental dissention. Thus, if any order was in fact given by Aurangzeb for curbing the publication of intricate mystical thought contained in the *Maktūbāt* among the illiterate masses of Aurangābād, which had then become a centre of anti-Mujaddid activities, it would have been of the nature of instructions by many a mystic guide upholding the doctrine of *Wahdat ul-wujūd* but asking their disciples not to go through the works of Ibn 'Arabī. In other words, even if this decree were accepted as authentic, it would not be helpful

in drawing the inference that Aurangzeb disagreed with the Mujaddid's forceful pleadings for enforcing the *shari'ah* as the law of the land. For this was Aurangzeb's accepted policy and his life-long endeavour as unmistakably demonstrated by the deliberate steps taken by him to nullify the religious eclecticism of Akbar, and the reaffirmation of the distinct and unique character of Islamic thought and conduct—all these were completely in accord with the teachings of Mujaddid and his virtuous descendants who were in close contact with him.

Be that as it may, the popular opposition stirred up by rivals of the Mujaddid after his death, in order to condemn and contradict the mystical thoughts contained in the *Maktūbāt*, died away in the first quarter of the twelfth century A.H. although it was initially supported by a number of scholars and jurists. The traces of these wranglings can now be seen only on the pages of historical writings, some of which are still unpublished, destined to be preserved in the archives. On the other hand a number of cloisters of Mujaddidyah order were set up by that time from India to Turkistān. The scholars and mystics allied to the Mujaddid's order propagated his thought and made the Arabic version of the *Maktūbāt* available to the Arab world. Shaikh Muhammad Murād al-Makkī Qazzānī acquainted the Turk and Arab scholars with the mystical thought of the Mujaddid by writing the *Zail ur-Rushahāt*. The Arabic translation of the *Maktūbat* was made available under the title of *Ad-Darr al-Maknūnāt al-Nafisi*. Shaikh Muhammad Nur-ud-dīn Uzbekī wrote the *'Atiyāt al-Wahhāb al-Fāsilah bayna ul-Khatā' wa as-Sawāb*. The book was popularly received in the Arab countries and Turkey and it helped to clear the mist of misunderstanding about the Mujaddid.[1] The response to these concerted efforts is

1. A more complete list of scholars who were won over by the scholars allied to the Mujaddidyah order and who later on took up the task of defending his thought can be seen in the *Nuzhat-ul-Khawātir* (Vol. v, p. 48).

adequately demonstrated by the complimentary remarks of a renowned scholar Shihāb-ud-dīn Mahmūd Alūsī al-Baghdādī (d. 1270/1854) about Shaikh Ahmad in his *Rūh-ul-Ma'ānī* in which he has profusely quoted from the *Maktūbāt*. By that time the flutter of opposition to Shaikh Ahmad among the circle of scholars had completely passed away.

> "As for the foam, it passeth away as scum upon the banks, while as for that which is of use to mankind, it remaineth in the earth. Thus Allah coineth the similitude."[1]

The scholars who had played a leading role in the disparagement of Shaikh Ahmad in Hijāz were all Kurdis. Shaikh Ibrāhīm al-Kaurānī was a Kurd and so was Muhammad b. 'Abd al-Rasūl al-Barzanjī who belonged to Shahrzor. Strange to say that Maulānā Khālid, also of Shahrzor, was selected by God to propagate the mystic order of Shaikh Ahmad who succeeded in spreading it to Irāq, Syria, Kurdistān and Turkey in a way unprecedented in the history of mysticism.

1. Q. XIII: 17

CHAPTER X

GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT OF MUJADDIDYAH ORDER

The Eminent Deputies

It would be difficult or rather impossible to catalogue all the noted deputies of the Mujaddid and their achievements. The number ran into thousands who were spread all over the Islamic world. We have already mentioned the names of a few of them who were commissioned to preach either outside the country or were sent to the different cities of India. We propose to give here only the names of the outstanding deputies with a bit detailed description of the reformative endeavour of the two, Khwājā Muhammad M'asūm and Syed Ādam Binnaurī, which would be helpful in estimating the popularity of the Mujaddidyah order, and the great task it has performed in reforming the morals and religious life of the Muslims. There is the least doubt that this success was achieved by the Will of God which always comes to the aid

of every virtuous task undertaken with the sincerity of purpose and in accordance with the way shown by the holy Prophet.

The more eminent deputies[1] of Shaikh Ahmad Mujaddid Alf Thani were: 1. Saiyid Ādam Binnaurī, 2. Maulānā Ahmad Barkī, 3. Maulānā Ahmad Daibanı (Deobandi), 4. Maulānā Amān Ullah Lāhorī, 5. Maulānā Badr-ud-dīn Sirhindī, 6. Shaikh Badī-ud-dīn Sahāranpūrī, 7. Shaikh Hasan Barkī, 8. Shaikh Hamīd Bangālī, 9. Hājī Khizr Khān Afghānī, 10. Mīr Saghīr Ahmad Rūmī, 11. Shaikh Tāhir Badakhshī, 12. Shaikh Tāhir Lāhorī, 13. Khwājā Ubaid Ullah alias Khwājā Kalān, 14. Khwājā 'Abdullah alias Khwājā Khurd, 15. Shaikh 'Abdul Ha'i Hisārī, 16. Maulāna 'Abdul Wāhid Lāhorī, 17. Shaikh 'Abdul Hādi Farūqi Badāūnī, 18. Maulānā Farrukh Husain Harwī, 19. Maulānā Qāsim 'Alī, 20. Shaikh Karīm-ud-dīn Bābā Hasan Abdālı, 21. Saiyid Muhib Ullah Mānikpūri, 22. Shaikh Muhammad Sādiq Kābulī, 23. Maulānā Muhammad Sālih Kaulābi, 24. Maulānā Muhammad Siddīq Kashmi, 25. Shaikh Muzammil, 26. Hāfiz Mahmūd Lāhorī, 27. Shaikh Nūr Muhammad Patnı, 28. Maulānā Yār Muhammad Jadīd Badakhshī Tālqānī, 29. Maulānā Yār Muhammad Qadīm, 30. Shaikh Yūsuf Barkī, and 31. Maulānā Yūsuf Samarqandī.

Khwājā Muhammad M'asūm[2]

A prefound sage and leader of the learned, Khwājā Muhammad M'asūm was the dearly beloved son of Shaikh Ahmad, whom he closely resembled not only in external appearance but also in his inward perfection. As a spiritual

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1. This list has been taken from the *Hazrat Mujaddid Alf Thānī* by Zawwār Husain and published by Idāra Mujaddidiyah, Karachi. For details *see* pp. 724-800 of the above-mentioned book and the article "*Tazkirah Khulfā'i Mujaddid Alf Thānī*" by Nasīm Ahmad Farīdi (pp. 310-351) in the *Tazkirah Imām Rabbānī Mujaddid Alf Thānī* compiled by Muhammad Manzoor Nomani.
2. The account given here has been taken from the *Nuzhatul Khawātir*, Vol. V.

descendant of his renowned father, he was a paragon of virtue and most celebrated for the beauty of his soul.

Born on 11th Shawwal 1007/27th April, 1599, he read the first few books from his elder brother Khwājā Muhammad Sādiq and then studied at the feet of his father and Shaikh Muhammad Tāhir of Lahore. He committed the holy Qur'ān to his heart within a brief period of three months and, like the reputed author of the *Sharh Waqāyah*, used to learn the writings of his father by heart while copying them. He succeeded his father after the death of the latter. Thereafter he went for pilgrimage and stayed for a long time in Medina before his return to India. The rest of his life he spent in guidance of the people and teaching *Tafsir Baidāwī*, *Mishkāt*, *Hidāyah*, *'Azodi* and *Talwīh* to his disciples.

Shaikh Murād b. Abdullah Qazvānī writes in the *Zail-ur-Rushahāt* that he was, like his father, one among the signs of God who illuminated the world and dispelled the darkness of ignorance and blameworthy innovations. Thousands of his disciples were helped by him to attain spiritual perfection and the knowledge of God. The number of persons who took oaths of allegiance to him is stated to be nine hundred thousand of which seven thousand qualified as his spiritual descendants. Of these one was Shaikh Habīb Ullah Bukhārī who rose to the position of most revered mystic Shaikh of his time in Khurāsān and Transoxiana, spread the light of *sunnah* in Bukhārā and the surrounding lands and guided four thousand among his disciples to attain the perfection of spirit enabling them to impart instruction to others in the disciplines of divinity.

The letters of Shaikh M'asūm were compiled in three volumes and like the *Maktūbāt* of his father, are a repository of wisdom and intricacies of mysticism, serving as a key to the letters of his father.

He died on the 9th Rab'ī-ul-Āwwal, 1079/7th August, 1668, at Sirhind where his grave is still visited by a large number of people.

Saiyid Ādam Binnaurī[1]

A prince of those endowed with divine knowledge and the very crucible of love for God, Saiyid Ādam b. Ismāil occupied a prominent position among the noted spiritual guides of the Naqshbandiyah order. His birth was promised by the holy Prophet in a vision to his father who lived in the village Binnaur, near Sirhind, where Saiyid Ādam spent his childhood days.

After entering the religious life Saiyid Ādam spent the first two months at Multān under the guidance of Hājī Khizr Raughānī, a disciple of Shaikh Ahmad and thereafter he came to pursue the mystical discipline at the feet of Shaikh Ahmad. However, Saiyid Ādam was first attracted to the divine, according to the *Khulāsatul Ma'ārif*, in the company of Shaikh Muhammad Tāhir of Lahore who is stated to have inherited the same from his father Shaikh Askandar and grandfather Shaikh Kamāl-ud-din Kaithalī. In any case, Saiyid Adam attained the sublime state of spiritual elevation hardly encompassed by his contemporary mystics. His way of mystical experience was meticulous adherence to the *sharī'ah* and the *sunnah* of the Prophet. He never made any deviation, either in utterance or practice, from strict compliance with the theological doctrine.

Innumerable persons were helped by him to walk the path of virtue and goodness; four hundred thousand are reported to have taken oath of allegiance to him, of which about a thousand were guided to attain the spiritual insight. His cloister had at least a thousand guests every day who came there for the satisfaction of their spiritual urge. It has been related in the *Tazkirah Ādamiyah* that when Saiyid Ādam went to Lahore in 1052/1642, he was accompanied by ten thousand

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1. The account given here has been taken from the *Nuzhatul Khawātir*, Vol. V.

persons including several nobles and mystics. Shāhjahān happened to be present at Lahore in those days and he felt perturbed at the popularity of Saiyid Ādam. He sent his minister S'ad Ullah Khān but the scant attention paid by the Shaikh to the prime minister caused to deepen the misunderstanding between the two and on S'ad Ullah Khan's report the king ordered Saiyid Ādam to proceed for performance of the pilgrimage. Accordingly, Saiyid Ādam left for Hijāz with his friends and relatives and stayed at Medina after performing the *haj*, where he ultimately breathed his last.

Saiyid Ādam has to his credit a number of mystical tracts, of which the *Khulāsatul Ma'ārif*, in Persian, covers two volumes. It opens with the words: 'Praise be to Allah, the Lord of the worlds; in great measure be He glorified to the extent of the perfections of his names and bounties.' His another work is entitled *Nikāt-ul-Asrār*.

Saiyid Ādam did not know reading or writing for he had not been educated by any one. He died on the 23rd of Shawwāl-1053/25th December, 1643 at Medina and was buried in the Jannatul Baqī near the grave of Caliph Uthmān.

Other Eminent Mystics

We propose to describe here, albeit briefly, some of the noted mystics associated with Khwājā M'asūm which will indicate the popularity enjoyed by them and the great influence they wielded on the Muslims of their day. A detailed account of their lives and works can be found in their biographies or other works purporting to describe sufi traditions. In so far as the sufis of India are concerned, sufficient details have been given in the fifth, sixth and seventh volumes of the *Nuzhat-ul-Khawātir*, the renowned work of Hakīm Saiyid 'Abdul Ha'ī.

Khwājā Saif-ud-dīn Sirhindī

The system of Khwājā Muhammad M'asūm was extensively diffused by his eldest son and spiritual successor Khwājā

Saif-ud-dīn (1049-1096/1639-1685) who achieved a great success in realising the reformist ends of Shaikh Ahmad by renewing the awareness of God and insisting on following the *sunnah* of the Prophet to the exclusion of all subsequent accretions and innovations. He took up his residence at Delhi, as desired by his father, and established the famous cloister which was later developed into an international centre of guidance and devotional exercises by Mirzā Mazhar Jān Jānan and Shāh Ghulām 'Alī, radiating spirituality to Afghānistān and Turkistān, on the one hand, and to Irāq, Syria and Turkey, on the other.

Aurangzab had, as stated earlier, taken an oath of allegiance to Khwājā Muhammad M'asūm and was imparted spiritual training by Khwājā Saif-ud-dīn. The annalists of the time record the incident that when the Khwājā went into the royal chamber, he objected to the pictures painted on its walls. The king at once ordered to efface all such paintings. The incident was reported by the Khwājā to his father in a letter in which he wrote:

> "How virtuous it is of the king that despite his magnificence and majesty, my advice was heeded and the counsel of this humble fellow was readily implemented."[1]

Khwājā Saif-ud-dīn used to report the spiritual experiences of the king to his father who expressed satisfaction, in one of his letters, at the progress made by the latter.

> "What you have stated of the king, the protector of religion, as, for example, the *zikr* (remembrance of divine names) pervading the recesses of his heart, attaining the state of *sultān-uz-zikr* (supreme remembrance) and the *rābita* (communion), absence of distraction, acceptance of the truthful advice, getting rid of the things forbidden and abandonment of desires, speak of his condition minutely. One ought to offer thanks to God for these qualities are

1. *Makātib Khwājā M'asūm*, Vol. III, No. 227.

now extinct in the kings."[1]

Emperor Aurangzeb used to keep himself in touch with Khwājā Muhammad M'asūm for traversing the stages of sufi path. Muhammad Sāqi Musta'id Khān, the author of *Maāsir Ālamgīrī*, has in the chronicles of the twenty-first year described the departure of the Emperor from the garden known as Hayāt Bakhsh, in the night of 13th Muharram, 1080/3rd June, 1669, to the house of the Khwājā and his return to the royal palace after remaining there for some time listening to the Khwājā's discourses and rendering honour to him.[2]

The Khwājā was very particular in commending the lawful and forbidding the unlawful. He had so given himself up to the task that according to Shaikh Murād b. 'Abdullah al-Qazzānī, the author of the *Zail-ur-Rushahāt*, he had almost uprooted the blameworthy innovations from the country. It was this concern for the *sharī'ah* which had earned for him the title of *muhtasib-ul-ummah* (censor of the community) from his father. He possessed a spiritual charm that used to cast a spell on those who happened to meet him. His disciples seemed to be carried away as if in a trance in his cloister. At the same time, he had such a dominating personality that even the nobles and kings did not dare sit down in his peresence and kept standing obediently. He was also immensely popular; over fourteen hundred people coming daily to pay a visit to him were provided with the victuals desired by them.[3]

After the death of Khwājā Saif-ud-dīn, his place was taken by his spiritual successor, Saiyid Nūr Muhammad Badāūnī (d. 1135/1723) who kept the torch of spirituality burning in his cloister. Thereafter, Mirzā Mazhar Jān Jānān took the seat of these masters. We shall speak about Mirzā Mazhar Jān Jānān later on.

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1. *Maktūbāt Khwājā M'asūm*, Vol. III, No. 227
2. *Maāsir 'Alamgīrī*, Asiatic Society of Bengal, 1871, p. 84
3. *Zail-ur-Rushahāt*, pp. 48-49

From Khwājā Muhammad Zubair to Maulānā Fazlur Rahmān Ganj-Morādābādī

The second son of Khwājā Muhammad M'asūm was Khwājā Muhammad Naqshband (1034-1114/1625-1702) who was also known as Hujjat Allāh Naqshaband. Appointed as his chief spiritual successor by Khwājā Muhammad M'asūm, he set about to propagate his father's way in all sincerity, temperance and humility.

Khwājā Muhammad Zubair (d. 1151/1738) b. Abīl 'Ālā', a grandson of Khwājā Muhammad M'asūm, succeeded Khwājā Muhammad Naqshband and achieved such a universal popularity as was not enjoyed by any other mystic of the period. The path he took from his house to the mosque was covered with turbans and wraps by the nobles and grandees so that he may not have to step down on the bare ground. If he ever went to see any ailing person or to take part in a repast, the procession formed by his followers resembled a royal march.[1]

Khwājā Muhammad Zubair had several noted successors of whom three, Shāh Ziā Ullah, Khwājā Muhammad Nāsir 'Andlīb and Khwājā 'Abdul 'Adl were particularly illustrious. The spiritual successor of the first was Shāh Muhammad Āfāq; the son of the second was Khwājā Mīr Dard Dihlawī; and the third was succeeded by Shāh 'Abdul Qādir Dihlawī, the first Urdu translator of the Qur'ān. All of them were highly respected mystics.

Khwājā Ziā Ullah was a profound sage endowed with both inward and outward perfection. Shāh Ghulām 'Ali used to say: "One who has not seen the winsome qualities of the Mujaddid may direct his eyes to Khwājā Ziā Ullah."[2]

His spiritual successor Shāh Muhammad Āfāq (1160-1251/1747-1835) was granted immense popularity by God and was an acknowledged mystic of the north-west India. When

1. *Durr-ul-Ma'ārif.*
2. *Ibid.*, p. 16

he went to Kābul, King Shāh Zamān Khān took an oath of allegiance to him.

The noted spiritual successor of Shāh Muhammad Āfāq was Maulānā Fazlur Rahmān Ganj-Moradābādī (1208-1313/ 1794-1895) whose spiritual magnetism, love of God, rigorous discipline in following the *sharī'ah* and deep knowledge of the *sunnah* were a source of spiritual enlightenment to the people in northern India over half a century. In his own words it was a power of love in action.[1]

Hakīm Saiyid 'Abdul Hā'i, the author of encyclopedic biographical accounts, is known for the catholicity of his views and critical evaluation of characters. He writes about Maulānā Fazlur Rahmān Ganj Morādābādī:

> "A throng of his admirers used to surround and follow him; gifts used to be showered on him by the nobility and the rich; and people used to come from far off places every day, making him the observed of all observers. He became a worthy prince of the mystics, graced with fame and popularity not enjoyed by any sufi Shaikh of the period.
>
> He was such a great worker of miracles that none

1. Most of the founders and directors of the Nadwatul 'Ulamā were spiritually attached to Maulānā Fazlur Rahmān Ganj Morādābādī as, for instance, Maulānā Saiyid Muhammad 'Alī of Monghyr, the founder and first director of the Nadwatul 'Ulamā, Maūlānā Masih-uz-Zamān Khān of Shāhjahānpūr (teacher of the Nizām of Hyderābād, Mahboob 'Alī Khān), Maulānā Saiyid Zahūr-ul-Islām of Fatehpūr, Maulānā Saiyid Tajammul Husain of Bihār, Maulānā Hakim Saiyid 'Abdul Ha'i, the prolific writer and director of Nadwatul 'Ulamā, Nawāb Sadr Yār Jang, Maulānā Habībur Rāhmān Khān Sherwānī (Minister for Religious Affairs, Hyderābād), and Hosām-ul-Mulk Safi-ud-daulā Nawāb Saiyid Alī Hasan Khān, another director of the Nadwatul 'Ulamā, were all disciples of Maulānā Fazlur Rahmān. Maulānā Saiyid Muhammad 'Alī of Monghyr also propagated the way of his master as his spiritual successor.

among the earlier saints except Shaikh 'Abdul Qādir could be cited by way of comparison."[1]

Mirza Mazhar Jān Jānān and Shāh Gulām 'Alī

Mirza Mazhar Jān Jānān Shahīd[2] (1111-1195/1699-1781) was the spiritual successor of Saiyid Nūr Muhammad. For thirty-five years he kept the hearts of the people at Delhi illuminated through his love-divine. The great scholar Shāh Walīullah writes about him.

> "Nothing about India is concealed from me for I have been born and brought up in this country. I have also visited and seen Arabia. As for Afghānistān and Irān, I have heard of the conditions prevailing there recounted by reliable persons. The conclusion I have reached, after giving thought to all I know, is that no profound sage so conscientious in following the path of the holy law delivered by the Prophet, no spiritual mentor so successful in guiding the people on the path of spirit and no mystic so strong in divinity is to be found these days in any country mentioned earlier by me. There might have been such men of God in the days gone-by but, the truth is; that the number of such virtuous persons is extremely limited in every age, let alone these days of chaos and confusion."[3]

Shāh Ghulām 'Alī was succeeded by several illustrious mystics, such as, Maulānā Na'im Ullah of Bahraich (1153-1218/1740-1803), the author of *M'amūlat Mazhar*, Qāzi Sanā Ullah of Panīpat (d. 1225/1810), another penman and scholar of encylopedic knowledge who wrote the *Tafsīr Mazharī* and *Mālā*

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1. *Nuzhatul Khawātir*, Vol. VIII. For a detailed account see the author's *Maulānā Fazlur Rahmān Gang Morādābādī*.
2. His name was Shams-ud-din Habīb Ullah while Jān Jānān was the name given to him by Aurangzeb soon after his birth.
3. *Kalamāt-i-Tayyabāt*, pp. 163-65

Bud Minh and Maulānā Ghulām Yahyā of Bihār (d. 1180/1766) but the most worthy successor who renovated the Mujaddidyah order was Shāh Ghulām 'Ali of Batālah (1156-1240/1743-1825). The last mentioned was a man of great spiritual perfection who achieved world-wide fame attracting travellers of the path of mysticism from every part of the country and other Muslim lands. There was hardly a city in India where he did not have a few disciples. In Ambāla alone there were fifty disciples of Shāh Ghulām 'Ali Batālvī. Sir Saiyid Ahmad Khan, a contemporary of the Shāh, writes in the *Āthār us-Sanādīd*:

> "I have myself seen in the cloister of the Shaikh people belonging to Rūm (Turkey) and Syria, Baghdād, Egypt, China and Ethiopia pledging allegiance to the Shaikh and dedicating themselves to his order. Furthermore, there were the disciples of the Punjab and Afghānistān who came to the hospice in large numbers. There also lived at least five hundred of them in the cloister who were provided free boarding and lodging."[1]

Shāh Ra'ūf Ahmad Mujaddidī who spent a few days in the company of the Shāh in his *khanqāh* writes that the disciples present on the 28th of Jamādi al-Ūla, 1231/26th April, 1816 hailed from Samarkand, Bukhāra, Tāskent, Hisār, Qandhār Kābul, Peshāwar, Kāshmir, Multan, Lahore, Sirhind, Amroha, Sanbhal, Rampur, Bareilly, Lucknow, Jā'is, Bahraih, Gorakhpūr, 'Azīmābād (Patna), Dacca, Hyderābad, Poona etc.[2] The popularity enjoyed by the Shāh reminds one of the Persian couplet of Maulānā Khālid Rūmī.

> Would that somebody conveyed slyly to that prince of the beloved,
> That the world has come to life again by his rainy cloud.[3]

1. *Āthār us-Sanādīd*, Chap. IV
2. *Durr-ul-M'aārif*, p. 106
3. The eulogy consisting of 69 couplets has been preserved by Shāh 'Abdul Ghanī Muhaddith of Delhi.

The celebrated disciples of Shāh Ghulām 'Ali diffused his order far and wide. Shāh Muhammad Na'im, also known as Miskīn Shāh (d. 1264/1848), who was a spiritual successor of Shāh Ghulām 'Alī's disciple Shāh S'ad Ullah, took up residence in Hyderabad where he was acknowledged as a spiritual guide by the ruler of Hyderābād, Mīr Mahboob 'Alī Khān Āsaf Jāh VI.[1] Another notable disciple of Shāh S'ad Ullah was Saiyid Muhammad Bādshāh Bukhārī[2] (d. 1328/1910). Others of the spiritual line of Shāh Ghulām 'Alī through whose efforts the Mujaddidyah order made rapid progress were Shāh Ra'ūf Ahmad Mujaddidī (1201-1266/1787-1850) who founded a hospice at Bhopal,[3] Maulānā Shāh Bashārat Ullah (d. 1254/1838), who set up a cloister in Bahraich, Shaikh Gul Muhammad, who popularised it in a Bukhārā[4] and Shaikh Ahmad, who came from Baghdād to obtain leave of Shāh Ghulam 'Ali to guide the people in his spiritual order.[5]

Maulānā Khālid Rūmī

Propagation of the Mujaddidyah order in Irāq, Syria and Turkey was taken upon himself by a Kurd scholar, Maulānā Khālid Rūmī by name, who spanned the continent in one year to traverse the path of spirit under the guidance of Shāh Ghulām 'Alī. He applied himself to the task of spiritual perfection with such a singleness of heart that whenever any scholar or mystic of Delhi came to see him, he always gave the reply that he could not divert his attention to anything else without accomplishing the task he had come for. It is stated that

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1. *Mukhbir-i-Daccen*, Madras, 2nd January, 1896.
2. He had settled down in Hyderābād where his cloistar was headed by Maulānā Saiyid 'Abdullah Shāh (d. 1384/1964), the author of the *Zajājat-ul-Masābih*.
3. Which was latter on headed by Pīr Abū Muhammad and then his son Maulānā Shāh Muhammad Y'aqūb.
4. *Durr-ul-Ma'ārif*, p. 125.
5. *Ibid.* p. 144

when the noted scholar of the time, Shāh 'Abdul 'Azīz paid a visit to Maulānā Khālid Rūmī, the latter sent for Shāh Abū Sa'eed asking him to tell the Shāh that he would himself call upon him after achieving his goal.

No sooner did Maulānā Khālid Rūmī return to his home than his name and fame were noised abroad attracting innumerable persons to his threshold. The events pertaining to Friday, the 24th of Rajab, 1231,[1] recorded by Shāh Ra'ūf Ahmad in the *Durr-ul-Ma'ārif* read: "A man who had heard of the eminence of Maulānā Khālid Rūmī has returned after meeting him in Baghdād. He says that about a hundred thousand persons have already affirmed allegiance to the Maulānā and about a thousand of them, many of whom are reputed scholars, always remain at hand to attend to his orders like servants."[2] In a letter written by Maulānā Khālid Rūmī to Shāh Abū Sa'eed he gave an account of the immense popularity gained by the Mujaddidyah order in the Middle East.

> "In all the dominions of Rūm (Turkey), Arabia, Hijāz Irāq and certain non-Arab countries including the whole of Kurdistān the *silsilah* of Naqshbandiyah order has been received as a greedily desired object. One can see the young and the old, in every gathering and concourse, mosque and *madrasa*, keenly discussing the merits of Imām Rabbānī Mujaddid Alf Thānī. The enthusiasm witnessed here these days is without a parallel in any land or at any time ...... Although the description I have given here amounts to self-indulgence and impudence and I feel ashamed of it, I have only penned these facts for the information of my companions."[3]

Ibn 'Ābidīn, commonly known as 'Allāmā Shāmī, was a

1. 20th June, 1816
2. *Durr-ul-Ma'ārif*. p. 170
3. *Tazkirāh Imām Rabbānī* (cited from the article of Maulānā 'Abdus Shakūr Farooqī)

devoted disciple of Maulānā Khālid Rūmi. In addition to the *Radd ul-Mukhtār Sharh Al-Durr ul-Mukhtār*, Shāmī has also written the *Sull ul-Hosām al-Hindī l' 'Nasrata Maulānā Khālid al-Naqshbandī* which gives, besides confuting the charges levelled against the Maulānā by his detractors, a brief biographical account of Maulānā Khālid Rumī. The Maulānā belonged to village Qarah Dāgh near Sulaimāniyah mountains where he was born in the year 1190/1776. After going through the then prevalent courses of study he acquired mastery in the then religious sciences as well as logic, mathematics and astronomy and then got busy in imparting instruction to the students of higher grades in medicine, dialectics, syntax etc. at Sulaimāniyah. In the year 1220/1805 he went to Mecca for *haj* where he felt a mysterious urge to take a trip to India. He returned, however, to Syria and it was there that he came to know about the spiritual eminence of Shāh Ghulām 'Alī from one of his disciples. He left for India in 1224/1809 and reached Delhi after one year taking the rough track through Irān, Afghānistān and Lahore. Within a short period of one year he attained perfection in the disciplines of five mystical orders and was granted permission by his Shaikh to go back to his own land for guiding others on the path of spirit. He went back to Baghdād in 1228/1813, after a brief stay of five months at his home, and very soon became a cynosure of the people in that metropolis. His popularity stirred the envy of certain persons who raised a tumult against him. However, at the instance of the governor of Baghdād Sa'eed Pāshā a number of scholars of the city certified his spiritual attainments and the soundness of his religious views. Thereafter innumerable persons belonging to Kirkūk, Arbil, Mosil, 'Amādiyah, A'intāb, Aleppo, Syria, Medina, Mecca and Baghdād got themselves enlisted to the order of Maulānā Khālid Rūmī.

'Allāmā Shāmī then gives an estimate of Maulānā Khālid's character and a list of his literary works. He also cites the opinion of a noted litterateur and poet Shaikh 'Uthmān.

Maulānā Khālid migrated to Syria in 1238/1823 alongwith a large number of his disciples. The whole country virtually converged to receive him with the highest honour and to obtain his blessings. The Maulānā guided the people not only on the path of spirit but also saw that they neglected not to observe even a dot of divine law. The Maulānā died of plague on 14th Dhī Qa'ada, 1242/9th June, 1827 and was buried in Qāsiyon. He was a lineal descendant of Caliph 'Uthmān b. 'Affān. Shāmi has narrated a dream of the Maulānā wherein he had seen that he was leading the funeral prayer of Caliph 'Uthmān. After narrating the dream he told the author that since he belonged to the lineage of Caliph 'Uthmān the dream was a foreboding of his own death. He narrated the dream at *maghrib* (sunset), gave directions about his will after the *'Ishā* (night) prayers, and thereafter went to his house where he was taken ill the same night and answered the summons of death before the crack of dawn.[1]

Shāh Ahmad Sa'eed and His Spiritual Descendants

The chief successor of Shāh Ghulām 'Ali, providing the nucleus from which his *silsilah* (line of succession) gained fame and popularity, was Shāh Ahmad Sa'eed ibn Shāh Abū Sa'eed (1217-1277/1802-1861). After the death of his father, Shāh Ahmad Sa'eed took charge of the cloister of Shāh Ghulām 'Alī and Mirza Mazhar Jān Jānān in 1250/1834 and continued to spread the light of Mujaddidyah order for 23 years till 1273/1857. He had to leave India during the uprising of 1857 whence he went away to Mecca and thereafter settled down in Medina. He died at Medina after a few years but during this brief period hundreds of Arabs and Turks pledged fealty

1. *Sull ul-Hosām al-Hindī*, p. 318-25. The Maulana's chain of spiritual descent still exists in Syria and Turkey where the author met a number of sufī guides of his order at Damascus, Halab and several cities of Turkey.

to him. An eye-witness report is on record that if Shāh Ahmad Sa'eed had remained alive for a few years more, the number of his disciples would have run into hundreds of thousands.[1]

It is difficult to enumerate all the deputies of Shāh Ahmad Sa'eed who had attained the perfection to guide others in his spiritual order. *Manāqib Ahmadiyah*[2] records eighty deputies. One of these was Shaikh Dost Muhammad Qandhārī who was succeeded by Khwājā 'Uthmān Dāmānī (d. 1314/1896). The latter employed himself in spreading abroad the instruction in divinity from Mūsā Za'ī, a town of district Derā Isma'il Khān. His chief deputy, Khwājā Sīrāj-ud-dīn (d. 1333/1915), became a great inspirer and caused the order to spread quickly to the distant lands. Endowed with an impressive personality and wide learning, he was able to combine the austerities of the mystical path with the cultivation of the science of *hadīth.* Maulānā Husain 'Ali Shāh (1283-1363/1867-1944) of Wān Bachrān[3] was the chief spiritual successor of Khwājā Sirāj-ud-dīn. He was a great reformer of the creed and morals who made the unalloyed Unity of God (*tawheed khālis*) the focus of his spiritual life.

Another noted mystic of the Mujaddidyah order during this period was Shaikh Shāh Imām 'Alī Makānwī[4] (1212-1282/1797-1865) whose popularity attracted devotees in such large numbers that 300 goats were slaughtered every day for preparation of repast to feed his guests.[5] His initiary pedigree goes back to Shaikh Ahmad through one of his Shaikhs 'Abdul Ahad Wahdat *alias* Shāh Gul.

1. Letter of Shāh Muhammad 'Umar s/o Shāh Ahmad Sa'eed to Maulānā Saiyid 'Abdus Salām of Haswa.
2. Written by Shāh Muhammad Mazhar.
3. A town in district Miānwāli of Punjab, Pakistān.
4. Makān Sharīf is a town in district Gurdāspūr. Its ancient name was Ratar Chatra.
5. For details see the *Tadkirah Be Mithl Rajgān-i-Rajaur*, pp. 508-21, by Mirzā Zafar Ullah Khān.

Another mystic of great distinction succeeding Shāh Ahmad Sa'eed was Maulānā Shāh 'Abdus Salām Wāstī (1234-1299/1819-1882) of Haswa. He was a man of great sanctity and spiritual perfection who popularised the mystic order of his precursors in the then United Provinces.[1]

Shāh 'Abdur Rashīd[2] (1237-1287/1822-1870) was the eldest son of Shāh Ahmad Sa'eed. He succeeded to the spiritual authority of his father after the latter died at Medina but later on migrated to Mecca where he continued to guide the people on the path of spirit. He died at Mecca and was buried in the Jannat ul-M'alā. His son Shāh Muhammad M'asūm (1263-1341/1847-1923) established Khanqāh-i-Mas'ūmī at Rāmpūr where he spent 23 years in spiritual guidance of the people. He returned to Mecca and died there in 1341/1923.

Shāh Muhammad Mazhar (1248-1301/1832-1884) was the second son of Shāh Ahmad Sa'eed. He was a perfect mystic who gained wide popularity with disciples spread all over Samarkand, Bukhāra, Qazzān, Turkey, Afghānistān, Irān, Arabia and Syria. He also constructed a three storeyed cloister known as Rabāt Mazharī at Medina, in 1290/1873, which is situated midway between Bāb-un-Nisā and Jannatul Baqī.

The third son of Shāh Ahmad Sa'eed was Shāh Muhammad 'Umar (1244-1298/1828-1881). Shāh Abul Khair Mujaddidī was his son and spiritual successor.

Shāh 'Abdul Ghanī

Shāh 'Abdul Ghanī (1235-1296/1820-1879), the younger brother of Shāh Ahmad Sa'eed, was also a man of great spirituality whose remarkable success in combining the cult of the mystics with the teaching of *hadīth* was not shared by any scholar save Shāh 'Abdul 'Azīz Dehlawī. He had the credit of producing such scholars as Maulānā Muhammad Qāsim

1. For details see *Nuzhatul-Khawātir*, Vol. 7
2. He was spiritual guide of Nawāb Kalb 'Alī Khān of Rāmpur.

Nānautwi and Rashīd Ahmad Gangohī who founded the great educational institutions of Deoband and Mazāhir-ul-'Uloom of Sahāranpūr which have made *hadīth* a popular subject of study in India. During the great upheaval of 1857, Shāh 'Abdul Ghanī left India for Hijāz, alongwith his elder brother, and settled down in Medina. Like the great Indian savant of *hadīth*, Shaikh 'Alī Muttaqi of *Kanz ul-'ummāl* fame, he spent the remaining period of his life in the teaching of *hadīth* and was ultimately laid to rest in the Jannat-ul-Baqī.[1]

Shāh 'Abdul Ghanī was succeeded by three heavenly-minded souls. One of these was Maulānā 'Abdul Haq (d.1333/1915) of Allāhābād who was more commonly known as Sāhib-ul-Dalā'il; the other was Shāh Abū Ahmad Mujaddidī (d. 1342/1924) of Bhopal; the third being was Shah Rafī-ud-dīn (d. 1308/1891) of Delhi, the first Principal of Dārul 'Uloom, Deoband, who left Muftī 'Azīz-ur-Rahman (d.1347/1928) as his spiritual successor. The cloister, graced by Shāh Ahmad Sa'eed and Shāh 'Abdul Ghanī, which had been a great centre of spiritual discipline for half a century in the country, remained vacant[2] for a long time until Shāh Abul Khair Mujaddidī (1272-1341/1855-1923), the grandson of Shāh Ahmad Sa'eed, once again made it a centre of spiritual instruction.

The descendants of Shaikh Ahmad left Sirhind in the fourth and fifth generations and took up quarters in different parts of the Islamic world. Although this step was taken to propagate and diffuse the Mujaddidyah order on a wider scale

1. One of the disciples of Shāh 'Abdul Ghanī, Shaikh Muhammad Yahya, (of Turhut, India), has written a biographical account of the Shāh and his spiritual successors.
2. The author has seen a letter of Shāh 'Abdul Ghanī, written by him from Medina in reply to a letter complaining about the deserted state of his cloister, in which he had urged the addressee to persuade Maulānā 'Abdus Salām of Haswa to take his place for he was the only person fitted for the task.

it eventually helped them from degenerating into mere mausoleum keepers—an institution marking the decline of many a mystical order. One branch of his house settled down in Kābul (in the Jawwād Fort[1]) to act as mentors of the people for spreading and stabilizing the spiritual truth of Islam. Nūr-ul-Mashā'ikh Shaikh Fazl 'Umar Mujaddidi also known as Sher Āghā belonged to this very extraction of Shaikh Ahmad's lineage. He had thousands of disciples in the Indo-Pak subcontinent.[2] His younger brother was Shaikh Muhammd Sādiq who held the post of ambassador for Afghānistān in several Arab countries and was also one of the founder-members of the Rābīta 'Ālam-i-Islāmī. He was an international figure highly respected for his keen interest in the welfare of Muslims as well as for his learning and piety. The two brothers were acknowledged leaders of Afghānistān and it was through their efforts that Nādir Shāh had to abdicate in favour of Amīr Amān Ullah Khān.[3]

Another branch of the Mujaddidyah family had taken up residence at Tando Sā'indād in Hyderābād, Sind. The two distinguished members of this line of succession were Khwājā Muhammad Hasan Mujaddidī and Hāfiz Muhammad Hāshim Jān Mujaddidī.[4]

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1. Alas! the Russian aggression and anti-Islamic measures taken by the pro-Russian government installed in that country resulted in destruction of this spiritual centre, as most of the descendants of Shaikh Ahmad were either arrested or killed or forced to leave the country. The author had, during his tour of Afghānistān in 1973, witnessed this spiritual centre prosperous and pulsating with life, and had been recipient of the warm hospitality of Maulānā Muhammad Ibrāhīm, the son of Nūr-ul-Mashāikh Shaikh Fazl Umar Mujaddidī.
2. He died on the 5th of Muharram 1376/13th August, 1956. The author met him at Mecca and Lahore.
3. For details see *Dariā'y Kābul se Dariā'y Yarmūk tak* by the author.
4. The writer of these lines paid a visit to Shāh Muhammad Hasan Mujaddidī at his house in 1944. Hāfiz Hāshim Jān used to visit

(Continued on the next page)

Ihsāniyah Order

Saiyid Ādam Binnaurī was guided on the sufi path by Shaikh Ahmad who had wafted upon him the breath of felicity, but being a man of spiritual insight his own way soon came to be recognised as a distinctive school known by the name of Ihsāniyah order. Strange though it may seem but the order founded by an unlettered person ultimately claimed the allegiance of the most eminent scholars, authors, savants of *hadīth* and the founders of great educational institutions, all maintaining a careful orthodoxy and the spirit of Quranic piety. The illustrious thinker Shāh Walīullah, his son Shāh 'Abdul 'Azīz, the great martyr Saiyid Ahmad Shahīd and his virtuous companions like Maulānā Ismā'il Shahīd and Shāh Is'hāq, the founders of Darul Uloom Deoband, Maulānā Muhammad Qāsim Nānautwī, Maulānā Rashīd Ahmad Gangohī and many others were not only initiated in the Ihsāniyah order but had also obtained leave to impart spiritual instruction to others. Shāh Walīullah has paid a glowing tribute to Saiyid Ādam Binnaurī for his insight into the spiritual truth and classified him among the founders of great mystical orders.

Those who were guided to attain the perfection necessary for acting as the deputies of Saiyid Ādam Binnaurī are too numerous to be enumerated here. The author of the *Nuzhatul Khwātir* has, however, listed Diwān Khwājā Ahmad (d. 1088/1677) of Nasīrābād, Shaikh Bā Yazīd (d. 1090-1679) of Qasūr, Shāh Fath Ullah (d. 1100-1689) of Sahāranpūr and Shaikh S'ad Ullah Balkhārī (d. 1108-1696) of Lahore among the prominent *khulfā'* of Saiyid Ādam Binnaurī. The four heavenly-

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Nizām-ud-dīn at Delhi and once he came to the author's house at Dā'ira Shāh 'Alam Ullah in Rae Bareli. Both these lines of descent, settled in Kābul and Sind, converged at Shaikh Ghulām Muhammad M'asūm or Masūm II, who was the grandson of Khwājā Muhammad M'asūm.

minded souls who popularised his order were Saiyid Shāh 'Alam Ullah Hasanī (1033-1096/1624-1685), Shaikh Sultān of Ballia, Hāfiz Saiyid 'Abdullah of Akbarābād and Shaikh Muhammad Sharīf of Shāhābād.

Saiyid Shāh 'Alam Ullah and his family

Shāh 'Alam Ullah wanted to migrate to Arabia alongwith Saiyid Ādam Binnaurī but the latter had instructed him to remain in India, saying, "Saiyid, take it easy and go back to your place. You would be like a sun among the stars in the mystics of Oudh." Khwājā Muhammad Amīn Badakhshī, a close disciple and confidant of Saiyid Ādam Binnaurī has testified about Saiyid Shāh 'Alam Ullah that "severely simple in his living, he was known for his piety all over India and Arabia......those who had seen him wondered if the Prophet's companions were like him".[1] According to the author of the *Bahr Zakhkhār*, he was "uniquely strenuous in fulfilling the demands of *sharī'ah* and despised everything worldly. He set an example of the prophetic way of life as few have done after the companions of the holy Prophet and the saints of God." When Shāh 'Alam Ullah went for performing the *haj*, the inhabitants of Mecca and Medina who saw him taxing his energies in following the *sharī'ah* in letter and spirit, very often remarked that he was Abū Darr of their times. He was ever mindful of following the example of the holy Prophet to the minutest detail and attained such a stage of sanctity that when he died, Aurangzeb had the vision of holy Prophet's demise in a dream. Extremely perturbed, the Emperor made enquiries about the significance of his dream and soon came to know that Shāh 'Alam Ullah had breathed his last in the very night he had had the vision.[2]

1. *Natā'ij-ul-Harmayn.*
2. Shaikh Wajīh-ud-dīn Ashraf, *Bahr Zakhkhār*; Shāh Ghulām Ali, *Durr-ul-Ma'ārif*, p. 46.

Shāh 'Alam Ullah and his descendants continued to practice the devotional rituals of the Ihsāniyah order. His fourth son, Saiyid Muhammad (d. 1156/1743) and later descendants like Saiyid Muhammad 'Adl *alias* Shāh L'al (d. 1192/1778), Saiyid Muhammad Sābir (d. 1163/1750), Shāh Abū Sa'eed (d. 1192/1778), Saiyid Muhammad Wāzeh, Maulānā Saiyid Muhammad Zāhir Hasanī (d. 1278/1861), Khwājā Ahmad b. Yāsīn Nasīrābādī (d. 1289/1872) and Shāh Ziā-un-Nabī (d. 1326/1908) were blessed with internal illumination. They guided thousands of persons on the path of moral rectitude and caused them to follow the example of the holy Prophet.[1]

Shaikh Sultān of Ballia

He was also a distinguished deputy of Saiyid Ādam Binnaurī. As stated in the *Natā'ij-ul-Harmayn*, Shaikh Sultān was endowed with inward and outward perfection. His name is very often mentioned in the mystical tracts alongwith Shāh 'Alam Ullāh.[2]

Hāfiz Saiyid 'Abdullah Akbarābādī

The third eminent spiritual successor of Saiyid Ādam Binnaurī who won widespread popularity for his Shaikh's order was Hāfiz Saiyid 'Abdullah of Akbarābād. He had among his disciples Shāh 'Abdur Rahīm Fārūqī (d. 1131/1719), father of Shāh Wali Ullah, whom he had also invested with the authority to initiate adherents to the Ihsāniyah order.[3] The

1. For a detailed account of these men of God see *Nuzhatul-Khawātir*, Vols. VI & VII.
2. He belonged to Lakhminia, district Begū Sir'āi in Bihār which was called Ballia in the past. His descendants are still to be found in that town. No writer has, however, left any detailed account of Shaikh Sultān.
3. The biographical details and virtues of Saiyid 'Abdullah have been preserved by Shāh Walīullah in the *Anfās-ul-'Arifin*, pp. 6-15, Mujtabi Press, 1335 A.H.

order was later on propagated on a wider scale through the efforts of Shāh Walīullāh and his son Shāh 'Abdul 'Azīz. Their line of spiritual descent was passed on from Saiyid Ahmad Shahīd to Hājī 'Abdur Rahīm Wilāytī and Miānjī Nūr Muhammad of Jhanjhānā and then it was spread by Hājī Imdād Ullah through his virtuous deputies like Maulānā Muhammad Qāsīm Nānautwī, Maulānā Rashīd Ahmad Gangohī and Maulānā Ashraf 'Alī Thānwī. It was further propagated by Maulānā Rashīd Ahmad Gangohi's disciples, Maulānā Mahmūd ul-Hasan of Deoband, Shāh 'Abdur Rahīm of Rā'ipūr, Maulānā Khalīl Ahmad of Sahāranpūr and Maulānā Saiyid Husain Ahmad Madnī. Shāh 'Abdur Rahīm was succeeded by Maulānā 'Abdul Qādir of Rā'ipūr while Maulānā Khalīl Ahmad had a worthy successor in Maulānā Muhammad Ilyās of Kandhla, founder of the Tablīgh movement of India. This line of spiritual succession went ahead to Maulānā Shaikh Muhammad Zakariya, a great scholar of *hadīth* and saintly soul of the present times.[2]

It would be difficult to give here even a brief account of the merits, virtues and services of Shāh Walīullah and Shāh 'Abdul 'Azīz for it would require another volume of this series to do justice to them. We have already referred to the views of Shāh Walīullah about the spiritual perfection of Mirzā Mazhar Jān Jānān. In the *Muqāmāt-i.Mazharī*, Shāh Ghulām 'Alī has set fourth the following observation of the Mirzā about Shāh Walīullah:

> "Shāh Walīullah has expounded a new method and has a novel way of explaining the secrets of spiritual truth. He deserves to be called a godly soul among the scholars ......even including the mystics......who have completely combined the outward and inward perfections. There are but a few persons like him who have given expression to

1. *Maqāmāt Mazharī*, Matba Ahmadi, pp. 60-61
2. Died 1st Sh'abān 1402 A.H./23rd May, 1982

unique and new thoughts."[1]

Fazl Haq of Khairābād was a renowned logician. When he went through the *Izālatul Khafā* of Shāh Walīullah he said to his students, "The author of this book is a man of encyclopedic knowledge, difficult to be encompassed by anyone." Mufti 'Ināyat Ahmad, an erudite scholar belonging to Kākorī remarked about Shāh Walīullah; "He is like the heavenly tree Tubā[2] whose roots are in his family and the branches in every Muslim house."[3] As for Shāh 'Abdul 'Azīz, his scholarly attainments, depth of knowledge in *hadith*, penmanship, spiritual perfection, virtuous character and deportment and anxiety for the well-being of Muslims give him an edge over the most prominent scholars of his age.[4]

Saiyid Ahmad Shahīd and His Followers

Saiyid Ahmad Shahīd was also initiated in the Ihsāniyah-Mujaddidyah order. Voluminous treatises like *Saiyid Ahmad Shahid—His Life and Mission* by Mohi-ud-dīn Ahmad are some of the books that trace his influence in the making of present-day Muslim community of Indo-Pak sub-continent.[5] The reformatory endeavour of the great Saiyid and the far-reaching effect his movement had on the subsequent development of Indian Muslims are now recognised by all, friends and foes alike. However, we cite here the views of some scholars of the earlier generations about the achievements of Saiyid Ahmad Shahīd. Abdul Ahad writes:

> "More than forty thousand Hindus and other non-Muslims embraced Islam through his efforts and three

1. *Muqāmāt Mazharī*, Matb'a Ahmadī, pp. 60-61
2. A tree in Paradise
3. See *Nuzhatul-Khawāti*, Vol. VI
4. See *Nuzhatul-Khawātir*, Vol. VII
5. Another brochure entitled "*The Misunderstood Reformer*" by the author would also be found useful by the reauers.

million Muslims pledged allegiance to him. His deputies are still enlisting people to his order and the number of all such persons would run into several millions."[1]

Maulānā Wilāyat 'Alī (d. 1269/1853) who had undergone great sacrifices for the sake of Saiyid's cause, attested that:

"Thousands of persons left their unsound creeds to embrace Islam. Within a brief period of five or six years three million persons took *bi'at* at the hands of the Saiyid while another hundred thousand were initiated in his order during his pilgrimage."[2]

Another reputed scholar, Nawāb Saiyid Siddīq Hasan Khān of Bhopāl (d. 1307/1890) who had met a number of Saiyid's disciples bears witness to the task of reform and renovation of faith performed by the Saiyid in these words:

"A sign of God he was in guiding the people on the right path and making their hearts incline towards God. A large number of these pure-hearted souls attained sainthood through the potent influence exerted by him, while his spiritual successors swept the country clean of all innovations and polytheistic thoughts and practices, and this great work of reformation is still continuing......In short, there was none so godly and perfect of spirit in the whole world in those days, nor was there any mystic or religious scholar who exerted such a salutary influence even over one-tenth of the people as he did."[3]

It was through the Saiyid's magnetic personality that the founders of Deoband school, on the one hand, and a body of selfless workers headed by the great organisers of Sādiqpūr,[4]

1. *Sawāneh Ahmadī* by Molvi Muhammad J'afar of Thanesar, p. 65
2. *Risāla D'awat* included in the *Risā'il Tis'a* by Maulānā Wilāyat 'Alī
3. *Taqsār-o-Juyūd ul-Ahrār*, pp. 109-110
4. Sādiqpūr was the biggest centre of the Saiyid's *Jihād* movement in India which continued to provide guidance to the movement after Saiyid Ahmad Shahīd's death. Its leaders, Maulānā Wilāyat 'Alī

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on the other, were initiated in the Mujaddidyah-Naqshbandiyah order. The first group exerted itself to establish educational institutions for religious reform while the second struggled against foreign influences alien to the spirit and teachings of Islam. Both of them awakened the Muslims from their deep slumber at a time when they seemed to have no future at all. These disciples and deputies of the Saiyid restored the self-confidence of the Indian Muslims. The intellectual ferment and quickened vitality of the masses informed by a sense of Islamic identity stirred up by the followers of Saiyid Ahmad Shahīd, constituted a marvellous achievement of the Saiyid's movement which was not only unparalleled in the history of mysticism and religious reform but also protected the great Muslim community of this sub-continent against ever reverting back to unsound beliefs and polytheistic practices as witnessed in India towards the later half of the tenth century A.H.[1] All these achievements assign a honoured place to the Saiyid among the galaxy of great *mujaddids* whom we find giving a call to the faithful at every turning point of our history.

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Maulānā Yahya 'Alī, Maulānā Ahmadullah, Maulānā 'Ināyat 'Alī Ghāzī, Maulānā Abdullah and Maulānā 'Abdur Rahīm, all belonging to the Sādiqpūr house made great sacrifices for the cause.

1. For a detailed study see *Saiyid Ahmad Shahīd—His Life and Achievements* by Mohiuddin Ahmad, which forms another volume of the series of *Saviours of Islamic Spirit*.

CHAPTER XI

THE WORKS OF SHAIKH AHMAD MUJADDID SIRHINDI

A list of Shaikh Ahmad Mujaddid Alf Thānī's work is being given here before drawing his biography to a close.

1. *Ithbāt un-Nubūwah* (Arabic). Its manuscript copies are still extant in the private collection of Mujaddid's descendants and their cloisters. It has been published in 1383/1963 by the Kutub Khāna Idāra Mujaddidyah, Nāzimābād, Karachi, alongwith Urdu translation. Subsequently its Arabic text was reprinted in 1385/1965 by Idāra Sa'adiyah Mujaddidyah, Lahore alongwith some other works of the author.

2. *Radd-i-Rawāfiz* (Persian). It was written in reply to the criticism by certain Irānian scholars, perhaps in the year 1001/1593. Parts of it are identical with the matters discussed in letters No. 80 and 202 of volume I of the *Maktūbāt*. This work has since seen several reprints. Hashmat 'Ali' Khān published the Persian text with Urdu translation of Prof. Dr. Ghulām Mustafa Khān from Rāmpūr in 1384/1964. Thereafter Idāra Sa'adiyah Mujaddidyah, Lahore, brought out the Persian

text and Urdu translation separately. Shāh Walīullah wrote a commentary to this work of Shaikh Ahmad but it was never published.

3. *Risālah Tahlīliyāh* (Arabic). The brochure was written in 1010/1601, and its manuscript is also extant. Idāra Mujaddidyah, Nāzimābād, Karāchi, brought out this work in 1384/1964 with Urdu translation. Thereafter the Arabic text was published in 1385/1965 by Idāra Sa'adiyah Mujaddidyah, Lahore, along with other works of Shaikh Ahmad.

4. *Sharh-i-Rubā'iyāt* (Persian). It comprises the commentaries on two quatrains of Khwājā Bāqi Billāh, first by the Khwājā himself, and the second by Shaikh Ahmad. Both the Idāra Sa'adīyah Mujaddidyah, Lahore, and Idāra Mujaddidyah, Nāzimābād, Karachi, have brought out this work in 1385/1965 and 1386/1966 respectively. Another commentary of the *Sharah-i-Rubāiyāt* was written by Shāh Walīullah under the title of *Kaśfh-ul-Ghain fi Sharh Rūbā'ytain* which has been printed by the Mujtabāī Press, Delhi, in 1310/1892.

5. *Ma'arif Laduniyah* (Persian). It deals with the mystical way of Shaikh Ahmad and investigates matters pertaining to *sulūk* (sincere compliance with the *sharī'ah*) and *ma'rifah* (cognition of truth). Written by Shaikh Ahmad in 1015/1016 A.H./1606/1607 A. D.), it has 41 chapters, each elucidating an aspect of *m'arīfah*. This work in Persian was first published by Hāfiz Muhammad 'Ali Khān from Matb'a Ahmadī, Rāmpūr, in December, 1898. Thereafter it saw a number of reprints under the aegis of Majlis 'Ilmī, Dhābel, Idāra Sa'adiyah Mujaddidyah and Idāra Mujaddidyah in different years.

6. *Mabd'a-o-Ma'ād* (Persīan). The work deliberates upon the esoteric nature of spiritual truths and realities. The subjects discussed in the tract were scattered in different writtings of the Shaikh which were collected and compiled under 61 subheadings by one of his spiritual successors, Maulānā Muhammad Siddīq Kashmī, in 1019/1610. The oldest print of the book available now was brought out by Matb'a Ansārī of Delhi

in 1307/1889. It was published several times thereafter and the latest edition brought out by Idāra Mujaddidyah of Karāchi contains its Urdu rendering by Saiyid Zawwār Husain. It was translated into Arabic by Shaikh Murād of Mecca.

7. *Mukāshifāt 'Ayniyah* (Persian). Manuscripts of certain writings of the Shaikh preserved by his deputies were compiled by Maulānā Muhammad Hashim Kashmī after the death of the Shaikh in this collection. The work is dated 1051/1641. It was first published by Idāra Mujaddidyah of Karāchi with Urdu translation in 1384/1964.

8. *Maktūbāt Imām Rabbānī* (Persian). This is the most important work of Shaikh Ahmad giving expression not only to his heart-felt affections, sentiments and thoughts but also his researches in the realm of spiritual realities. It bears witness to his intellectual gifts and the originality of thought which have made him known as the Mujaddid Alf Thānī (Renewer of the Second Millennium). A separate volume would be required to explain the literary excellence as well as mystical revelations and subtle facts of esoteric realities discussed in it. It is one of those books written by an Indian scholar which has been rated highly by the scholars of other countries and rendered into Arabic and Turkish. It has also been one of the most esteemed and popular works in the circles of sufis, many of whom have made it the principal book of study. Neither its contents nor its literary style has grown stale with the passage of time.

The *Maktūbāt* contain 536 letters of Shaikh Ahmad divided into its three volumes. The first volume having 313 letters was compiled, in accordance with the desire expressed by the Shaikh himself, by Maulānā Yār Muhammad Jadīd Badakhshī Tālqānī in the year 1025/1616. The second volume containing 99 letters was assembled by Maulānā 'Abdul Ha'i Hisārī Shādmānī in 1028/1619 on the suggestion of Khwājā Muhammad M'asūm. In 1031/1622 the third volume with 114 letters was compiled by Maulānā Muhammad Kashmī. Ten more letters were later

on added to the last volume

The *Māktūbāt* has seen several reprints from time to time. It was most probably first published by the Newal Kishore Press, Lucknow, which reprinted it several times. Later on Matb'a Ahmādī and Matb'a Murtazawī, both of Delhi, printed the book time and again. In 1329/1911 a de-luxe edition of the *Maktūbāt* was brought out by Maulānā Nūr Ahmad of Amritsar.[1]

THE END

1. Summarised from the *Hazrat Mujaddid Alf Thānī* by Maulānā Saiyid Zawwār Husain Shāh.

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